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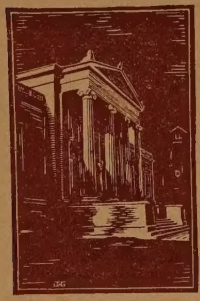

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STUDENT'S HISTORY OF THE HEBREWS

BY
LAURA A. KNOTT

WITH MAPS
AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO MY MOTHER

AT WHOSE KNEE

I FIRST LEARNED TO KNOW AND LOVE

THE BIBLE

50824

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PREFACE

THE last two or three decades have witnessed a remarkable revival of interest in the Old Testament. Many who had become indifferent to it because they lacked intelligent acquaintance with its real character have rediscovered it owing to the light thrown upon it by modern scholarship. The educational value of the Old Testament for the twentieth century has as yet hardly begun to be appreciated.

There are indications on every side of a deepening interest in religious education, and earnest efforts are being made for the improvement of methods in this important field. One of the chief obstacles to progress is the dearth of good textbooks. This book is the result of many years of experience in teaching Bible classes consisting of pupils from seventeen to twenty years of age in a secular school, and adult classes in church schools and community schools of religious education. It is believed to be especially well adapted to the needs of similar classes in other schools, as well as to the use of the general reader who desires a brief guide to accompany Old Testament study.

Of the different angles from which these lessons from the Bible may be approached none that are vital have been neglected. The pupil should come to the close of the study with a knowledge of the main facts in the history of the Hebrews, with a good idea of the successive steps in the development of their moral and spiritual ideals, with an appreciation of a few of the superb literary masterpieces of this gifted race that will stimulate further study in the fascinating

field, and, last but greatest of all, with a new vision of the eternal truths that have made the Bible such a power in the lives of men.

It is the thought of the author that the lessons are of about the right length for pupils of the last year of the secondary school, the teacher supplementing where necessary by especially assigned work in reference books, but that adult classes in church schools and community schools of religious education will be able to take two or even three lessons at a time.

The author is indebted to the following named publishers for permission to use quotations from their publications: Charles Scribner's Sons, Kent's *A History of the Jewish People*, and *The Heroes and Crises of Early Hebrew History*, H. P. Smith's *Old Testament History*, Goodspeed's *History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, and Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible;* Henry Holt & Co., Moore's *The Literature of the Old Testament;* The George H. Doran Co., George Adam Smith's *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, and Gordon's *The Prophets of the Old Testament;* The Open Court Publishing Co., Cornill's *The Prophets of Israel*, and *History of the People of Israel;* Oxford University Press and Thomas Nelson & Sons, *The New Century Bible;* The Macmillan Company, Mathews' *New Testament Times in Palestine;* Harper & Brothers, *The Women of the Bible;* The American Sunday-School Union of Philadelphia, *Barton's Archæology and the Bible;* J. P. Lippincott & Co., *The First Book of the Maccabees.*

All references to Hastings's *Dictionary of the Bible* are to the one-volume edition.

Works that have been consulted in the preparation

of this volume: In addition to those mentioned above, Kent's *The Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah*, *The Founders and Rulers of United Israel*, *A History of the Hebrew People;* George Adam Smith's *The Twelve Prophets;* Kittel's *A History of the Hebrews;* Peritz's *Old Testament History;* Wade's *Old Testament History;* Riggs' *A History of the Jewish People*, and Bevan's *Jerusalem under the High Priests.*

The cuts on pages 35, 43, 53, 199, 249, 295, and 388 are used by courtesy of American Sunday-School Union, Philadelphia.

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THERE are two distinct kinds of biblical knowledge. One is knowledge *about;* the other is knowledge *of.*

The former is scientific, descriptive, analytical, objective. It emphasizes historical and geographical information. It is concerned with facts in their relationships, in their proper settings. The scientific student seeks to find out all he can *about* the subject as history, as literature.

The latter is subjective, personal, appreciative, synthetical. It is accompanied by emotion. A person may hate the science of (knowledge about) botany but love flowers. His interest remains with the flowers themselves and not in their constituent elements or surrounding conditions.

The modern student of the Old Testament faces a twofold task. His attitude must be that of reverent appreciation. He needs to sense the eternal values of this sacred literature. Its truths can become dynamic factors in his own religious experience. But this knowledge of the ancient yet ever-living covenant must not keep him from having an open mind and a scientific attitude. If he studies reverently, the more he knows *about* the history of the Hebrews, the more directly, trustworthily, and powerfully will it affect his own life and prepare him for that climax of the progressive revelation of God—Jesus of Nazareth.

Miss Knott has placed the church under a heavy debt of gratitude for three reasons. She has made a painstaking, thoroughly scientific study of the history of the Hebrews. In presenting the results of this

study she has shown an attitude of sincere reverence that frequently compels a devotional disposition on the part of those who follow the material she has produced. Through fifteen years of experience in teaching the Bible to students of academy age, she has developed a power of adaptation which has made it possible for her to produce a volume which will be recognized immediately as a pedagogical masterpiece.

It is Miss Knott's ability to hold these three interests in perfect balance that makes her text unique. She has produced a volume that is eminently suited to the needs of training schools, high schools (senior class), and college freshmen. Her point of view is always spiritually constructive and she does not surrender intellectual honesty in the face of a single problem.

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LESSON I

THE IMPORTANCE OF HEBREW HISTORY

No one can afford to remain ignorant of the history of the Hebrews because so much that is precious in our modern civilization is due to this gifted race. We place emphasis upon the study of ancient Greece, and rightly, for in that country arose one of the two great streams of influence that have shaped our modern world. The Greeks were lovers of beauty, and in Greek art there is inspiration for all time. In science and philosophy also the Greeks surpassed all other races of antiquity. They were weak, however, in moral and spiritual ideals. Though some of their greatest men were monotheists, the Greeks as a whole were always worshipers of many gods. Moreover, they never arrived at the conception of morality in their gods. No race has ever been better than the gods it worshiped.

From the Hebrews emanated another stream of influence which has shaped our noblest moralities. Through that race we have gained our highest conceptions of God and religion. Many of the ideas the Hebrews gave the world have so long been common property that we hardly realize that they have not always been in existence. It seems a commonplace to us that God is just, all-wise, and merciful, but it is chiefly from the Hebrew race that we get these ideas. Since religion lies at the base of all morality, and since character is the greatest thing in the world, our indebtedness to the Hebrew race cannot be overestimated.

The contribution made by the Greeks and that made by the Hebrews supplement each other. Each is indispensable for the development of a complete civilization; each is necessary in the development of the individual.

The contribution of the Hebrew race to the world.—It is the remarkable distinction of the Hebrews that their leaders were the first to declare their belief in one God, creator and ruler of the universe. During those centuries when the tales of the Iliad and the Odyssey were taking shape, in which the gods are represented as jealous, vengeful, and immoral, the Hebrew prophets were thundering forth their denunciations of the evils of their day as displeasing to Jehovah, who was a righteous God, demanding righteousness in his people. While the rest of the world feared the gods and sought in every way to appease them, the Hebrew prophets were teaching their people of a patient, long-suffering God of love. In the fullness of time, when the way had been prepared by prophet, priest, and sage, the Hebrew people gave the world the supreme revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

Out of the rich and vital experience of this race came the Book that ranks above every other book, the Bible.

Why should we study the Bible?—1. Because no one who is ignorant of it can claim to be an educated person. Many of its characters are as well known as the most famous kings and queens of history, and they have had far greater influence upon the life of the world. The Bible has permeated all literature and has entered into our common speech as has no other book.

2. Because it contains some of the greatest literary masterpieces of all time. Why should we know Homer and Dante, Shakespeare and Milton, and be ignorant

of the book of Job and the prophecy of Isaiah? Addison, Macaulay, Ruskin, Daniel Webster, and many other masters of English prose have expressed their immeasurable indebtedness to the Bible.

3. Because it is a record of the steps by which God has led men to a deepening knowledge of himself and his will and purpose for man. It has been the moral and spiritual guide of the best part of the human race. Each age has found in the Bible the best help it has found anywhere in meeting its problems, and we have not begun to exhaust its possibilities in this direction. For example, we are interested to-day as no age has ever been in the problems of social reform; and we are just discovering that all the great Hebrew leaders were social reformers, with a passion for justice between man and man.

4. Because in the Bible we find voiced our own highest aspirations and deepest needs. Containing the record of the best that was thought and felt during a period of a thousand years by the most spiritual of all races, it is a mine in which each finds whatever treasure he seeks. The Bible is no respecter of persons. It is the book of the young as well as of the old, of the uneducated as well as of the educated, of the lowly as well as of those of high degree.

Will the Bible endure?—The Bible has a marvelous power of self-adjustment. We outgrow our conception of it, but we never outgrow it. It has survived all attacks of its enemies and, what is more important, the mistaken and misdirected zeal of some of its friends. Seventy-five years ago its defenders thought that if the theory of evolution should prove to be true, the Bible would be overthrown. Evolution in some form is now generally accepted, yet the Bible

is stronger than ever. We know now, however, that we are not to regard it as a textbook on science, or even on history. We go to it, not to find out how the world was made, but how to live our lives aright.

How shall we study the Bible?—Reverently, yet fearlessly. Reverently because it has earned our veneration; fearlessly because our minds were given us to be used. All truth is God's truth, and no two truths can come into conflict. No one can really understand the Bible who does not make use of the results of modern scholarship.

We shall study the Bible, then, like any other book, trying to find out all we can about the authorship and date of its various parts, and the conditions that called them forth. But this will be only a means to an end —the understanding of the Bible itself. Says Professor J. F. Genung:[1] "We study the Bible like any other book, and this is right. But well we know in our heart of hearts that more truly we cannot study it like any other book. As soon as we stand within its venerable precincts it lays power and authority upon us. Here are words before which we cannot remain neutral, words that tingle and quicken and search us like a fire. . . . Wherein lies their power? Men have tried to name it; they have called it inspiration, and then have filled libraries with books attempting to define what the word means; and no one could exactly tell, beyond this, and in this all are agreed, that it is the realest, indisputablest thing in the Bible; that its presence and power sets the Bible apart from human literature forever, and makes it the perennially modern book of the centuries."

[1] *The Outlook*, November 12, 1898.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HEBREW HISTORY

Questions

1. What special contributions did the Greeks make to modern civilization?
2. When was Greece at her height as a world power?
3. What is the greatest debt owed by civilization to the Hebrew race?
4. Show why the contributions of both races are necessary.
5. Discuss the place and importance of the Bible, with reasons for its study.
6. Is the Bible growing in popularity? (It is at all times the "best seller" among books.)
7. Why do we need the assistance of modern scholarship in studying the Bible?
8. What is the best way to find out that it is not like other books?
9. Mention several great paintings of biblical subjects, some noteworthy musical compositions that were inspired by the Bible, and at least one great poem with biblical theme.

LESSON II

THE OLD TESTAMENT WORLD

The student of Hebrew history cannot ignore the great nations whose life touched that of Israel at manifold points—Assyria, Babylonia, Egypt, Phœnicia, Aram, and at a later period, Persia, Greece, and Rome. In the earliest times the civilization of the world was confined to two continents, Asia and Africa, and to small areas of these. Civilization on the continent of Africa was limited to one country, Egypt, which occupied the northeastern part. From a very early period a number of different races inhabited the part of Asia lying between Egypt and the Caspian and Black Seas. The cultivable portion of southwestern Asia has aptly been styled a "fertile crescent,"[1] the boundaries of which are marked out by a circuit of mountains, waters, and desert. This semicircle has its open side to the south. The mountains above it look down on the great Arabian Desert below, five hundred miles in width. The west wing of the crescent is Palestine and the east is Babylonia. The distance between Jerusalem and Babylonia is about eight hundred miles, and it is fourteen hundred miles from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. We are here dealing with magnificent distances.

The geography of Palestine.—This country, called Canaan in Old Testament times, was not a land of fixed dimensions but varied in extent at different periods. Roughly speaking, it extended from the Armenian Mountains in the north to the wilderness of Judah in

[1] J. H. Breasted, *Ancient Times*, p. 100.

the south; and in later times from the Mediterranean Sea on the west to the Arabian Desert on the east. The early Hebrews controlled little seacoast land. During the greater part of Hebrew history their country was one hundred fifty miles or less in length and from fifty to seventy-five in width, that is, smaller in size than the State of Massachusetts. The greater part of this area was barren and unproductive.

Through the center of Palestine runs the Jordan

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE DEAD SEA

River, fed by the Sea of Galilee in the north, and flowing south into the Dead Sea, so called because on account of its saltness it contains no living thing. The most remarkable feature of this sea, or inland lake, is that it lies twelve hundred and ninety-two feet below the surface of the Mediterranean Sea, less than fifty miles away, and is the lowest body of water on

the surface of the earth. Its saltness is due to two things, its stupendous evaporation (some six million tons every twenty-four hours), and the fact that it has no outlet. Its waters contain twenty-five per cent of salt.

The Sea of Galilee is six hundred and eighty feet below the level of the sea. The distance between it

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

A FERRY ACROSS THE UPPER JORDAN NEAR THE SOUTH END OF THE SEA OF GALILEE

and the Dead Sea is only sixty-five miles, but the Jordan River, which connects them, "trails and winds like an enormous green serpent," and is about one hundred miles long. The current of the river is very rapid, and the banks are overgrown with a rank jungle in which wild beasts still lurk. The Jordan valley, including the Sea of Galilee, twelve miles in length,

and the Dead Sea, fifty-three miles, is called by George Adam Smith "a colossal ditch."

Parallel to the Jordan valley, that is, extending north and south, are the maritime plain (along the coast), the central highland, and, on the other side of the Jordan valley, the eastern table-land. All of these, however, are more or less modified. The central high-

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE EASTERN BANK OF THE JORDAN

land, on which the Hebrews chiefly made their home, is broken by the great, fertile plain of Esdraelon.

Palestine is a land of contrasts. Perhaps nowhere else on the surface of the globe can there be found within so small a compass so wide a diversity in soil, climate, and vegetation. This is due chiefly to the great variation in altitude and to the climatic conditions produced by the proximity of the great Arabian

Desert on one side and the sea on the other. In the north there are mountains snow-capped even in the summer, while less than a day's journey southward is the region of the Dead Sea, with its semitropical heat. Jericho, in the lower Jordan valley, was called "the city of palms," while the cedars of Lebanon in the north suggest the rigors of a cold climate. In this unique land we are not surprised to find the plant and animal life of the temperate, torrid, and frigid zones.

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE MOUNTAINS OF GALILEE

The Hebrews and their relation to their country.— Every nation is to some extent the product of its environment, and it is not difficult to see that the location and geographical features of Palestine helped to determine the rôle the Hebrews were to play in the world's history. Its people were hemmed in by sea and mountain and desert. And yet they were centrally located, for, as has often been said, Palestine formed a bridge between Asia and Africa. On the east were Babylonia and Assyria, and on the southwest Egypt —the greatest empires of antiquity. All travel between these empires was north and south, through

Canaan, for the Arabian Desert was impassable. Traders from all nations passed over the highways of Canaan. Military expeditions constantly traversed it. It was a frequent battleground between devastating armies, was forced to make alliances, now with one nation, now with another, and was itself a constant bone of

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

MOUNT HERMON

(The highest mountain in Palestine, about 9000 feet in height. It is covered with snow most of the year.)

contention because of its strategic importance. For these reasons it never remained long undisturbed. These facts have much to do with the development of the people. On the one hand, they absorbed much of the best of the civilization of their more powerful neighbors; on the other, they were the constant prey of these neighbors, and were compelled to suffer as

has no other race. This suffering had much to do with the development of their religion.

The beginnings of civilization.—It is now practically agreed among scholars that civilization began in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, which furnishes conditions highly favorable to the support of primitive man—a hot sun and a very fertile soil. Two great rivers, the Tigris, eleven hundred fifty miles long, and the Euphrates, eighteen hundred, rising in the mountains of Armenia, seven thousand feet above the sea, carried with them rich alluvial deposits which formed a very fertile plain at their mouth. These rivers also furnished great highways for commerce, and out of the clay of their banks bricks were made for building. In this rich land one race after another held sway.

The Amorites.—The Amorites were a race of Semitic origin that made their home in Syria, Mesopotamia, and also Babylonia, as early as B. C. 2500. At some time they overran Palestine, bringing with them Babylonian culture. At the time of the Hebrew invasion the Amorites were occupying the hill country of Palestine and the Canaanites the low country, though both names are used in the Bible for all the native races of Canaan.

The Babylonians.—The first to build up a world empire in the Euphrates valley were the Babylonians. The reign of Sargon, the first great Babylonian king, is believed to have been about B. C. 2800. About B. C. 2300 the remarkable king, Hammurabi, united the city states, with Babylon as the capital. He left a great law code cut in the solid rock more than a thousand years before the time of Moses. The Babylonian language was used in Canaan about B. C. 1400,

as is shown by letters that passed between that country and Egypt. Soon after the time the Hebrews appeared on the stage of history a new race, the Assyrians, an offshoot of the Babylonians, supplanted that race as the greatest Asiatic power. We shall be interested in the Assyrians because of the constant struggles the Hebrews had with them during several hundred years, and also in the neo-Babylonian empire under Nebuchadrezzar, which finally destroyed the Hebrew state.

HAMMURABI RECEIVING THE LAWS FROM THE SUN-GOD

The Egyptians.— The most fertile part of Egypt lay about the delta of the Nile, that remarkable river, which, formed by melting snows and great lakes in the heart of Africa, flows northward over three thousand miles into the Mediterranean Sea. The delta of the Nile is exceedingly fertile, as are also its banks because of their inundation by the river. At the time the Hebrews sought entrance into Canaan the Egyptians were the most powerful nation in the world, having had a high state of civilization for centuries. They built magnificent temples and palaces, and were well versed in the arts and sciences. At the time the Hebrews first came into contact with them the Egyptians were masters of all that part of Africa adjacent to them and had even made some conquests in Asia.

Origin of the Hebrew race.—The Hebrews belonged to that branch of the human race known as the Semitic. To the same branch belonged also the Babylonians, Assyrians, Phœnicians, Canaanites, and Arabs. The most important non-Semitic race with whom they came in contact was the Egyptian. All the Semitic peoples were descended from nomads from Arabia. These nomads had flocks and herds, lived in tents and moved about at will, easily changing their abode. Sometimes a great horde of them would start out to seek a place where the grazing for their cattle was better, and where they could therefore live in greater comfort. They did not hesitate to take by force the land of tribes weaker than themselves. Just how or when the Hebrews migrated to Canaan history does not tell us.

QUESTIONS

1. Give the approximate size of Palestine; its location and natural features; something of its climate and vegetation.
2. What was the land called in Old Testament times?
3. Why was it of great strategic importance?
4. Describe the "fertile crescent" of southwestern Asia, giving its boundaries.
5. Locate on the map the Zagros Mountains, the Black Sea, the Caspian Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers; Tyre and Sidon, Nineveh, Damascus, Babylon and Jerusalem.
6. What were the two most important nations contemporary with the early Hebrews?
7. Where is it believed that human civilization originated?
8. To what great branch of the human family did the Hebrews belong?
9. Mention other races belonging to the same branch.
10. What was the original home of these races?

NOTE.—For further study of this subject, see George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, especially Chapter II.

LESSON III

THE HEBREWS IN EGYPT

As some of the ancestors of the Hebrews lived for a long time in Egypt, the student of Hebrew history will find the study of Egyptian history of unusual interest. As we have already seen, the Egyptians were one of the two races having the earliest civilization known to us. Before B. C. 3000 they had invented the art of writing, using hieroglyphics,[1] or picture writing. Inscriptions in abundance have survived from ancient Egypt. Modern scholars long studied the curious marks which covered obelisks, monuments, and the walls of temples along the Nile, knowing that if they could be made to tell their story it would be one of surpassing interest. Until one hundred years ago, however, no clue had been obtained to the mystery.

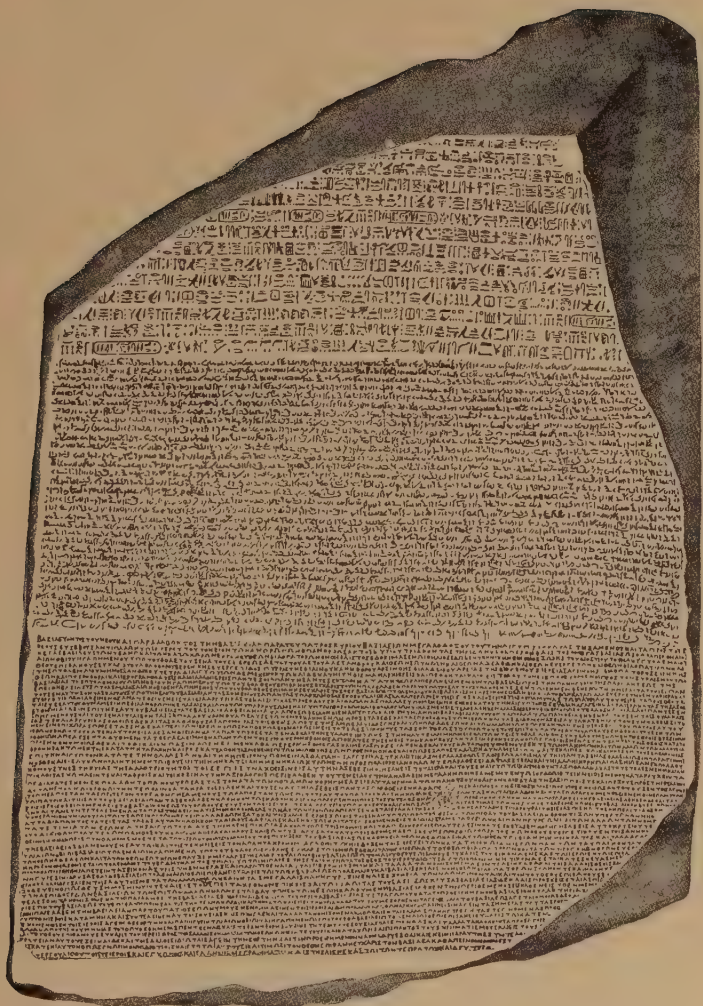
The decipherment of the hieroglyphics.—The story of the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphics is a fascinating one, and shows that to the determined spirit of man nothing is impossible. In 1822 a Frenchman by the name of Champollion published the discovery that made possible the restoration of this lost chapter in human history. This remarkable man had become interested in the subject at the early age of eleven, and resolved then that he would devote his life to the work. He did so, with what results we have seen, but through hardship and exposure in prosecuting his labors he died at an early age—a martyr to the cause he loved.

[1] See Breasted's *Ancient Times*, pp. 44ff. and 97ff.

Champollion, by means of an obelisk containing the names of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, written both in hieroglyphics and in Greek, was able to identify a number of hieroglyphic characters. He continued his study by means of the Rosetta stone and succeeded in reading it. This stone was found by the soldiers of Napoleon near the Rosetta mouth of the Nile in 1799. It contains three duplicate inscriptions, one in hieroglyphic, one in ordinary Egyptian script, and one in Greek.

The witness of archæology.—In addition to the inscriptions, excavations in various parts of Egypt have yielded rich results. Rain is very rare in Egypt and frost almost unknown. For this reason the dry, sandy soil is able to preserve unharmed for thousands of years articles that are buried in it. In addition to papyri of early date beautiful jewelry has been found, fine linen, artistic furniture, dishes and utensils of all sorts, and pictures showing the life in minutest detail. There are pictures of men writing and reading, plowing and sowing grain, collecting taxes, marketing, making glass, and working at the goldsmith's bench and potter's wheel. Women are pictured weaving, sewing, and grinding corn. The soil of Egypt may be expected to yield many more rich treasures in the future.

Ancient Egypt.—The first Egyptian period of which we have any knowledge is the Pyramid Age, from about B. C. 3000 to B. C. 2500, when the giant pyramids which rise from the desert sands near Gizeh were constructed as royal tombs. The second period is the Feudal Age, from the twenty-fifth to the sixteenth century B. C., when powerful nobles lived like little kings on their great estates on the Nile beyond Gizeh.



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THE ROSETTA STONE

bearing the same inscription in Egyptian and Greek. The upper third of the stone is written in ancient hieroglyphics, the middle third in ordinary Egyptian handwriting, or demotic, and the lowest third in Greek. The demotic corresponds to our handwriting, the hieroglyphic to our print.

The third period, that of the empire, from the sixteenth to the twelfth century B. C., is the one which interests us most as students of the Old Testament, for it includes the time of the Israelitish sojourn in Egypt. This period was one of aggression. Not only did the Pharaohs obtain much new territory in Africa, but they carried their arms into Asia as far as the Euphrates. The conquests of the Pharaohs brought them great

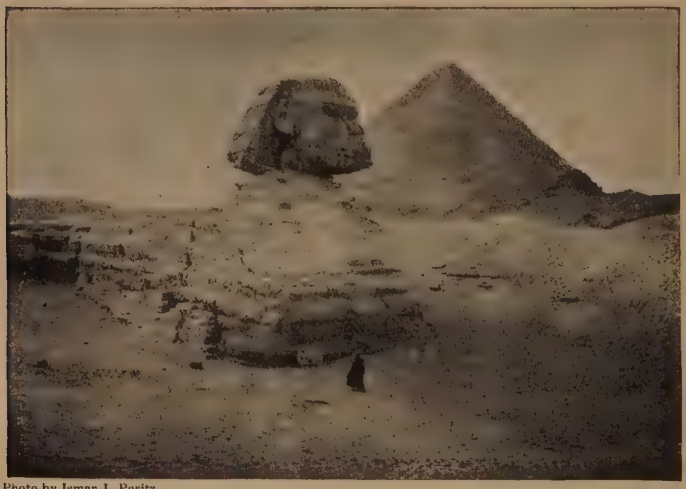


Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE SPHINX AND THE GREAT (KHEOPS) PYRAMID

wealth, and this was a time of building enterprise and material development. The most important of the buildings centered about their capital, Thebes. The temple of Karnak, near Thebes, is in many respects the greatest architectural work yet achieved by man.

Early Hebrew traditions.—The traditions[1] of the

[1] There is a popular misconception that the word "tradition" implies that the literature thus designated is necessarily untrustworthy and unhistorical. Many traditions would be found to be genuine history if it were possible to collect the data concerning them which the historian demands.

Hebrew race begin with the migration of their ancestor, Abraham, from Haran in Mesopotamia to Canaan. According to the narrative in Genesis, Abraham, taking with him his family and servants, flocks and herds, moved westward in search of the one true God. The tribe did not remain long in Canaan, probably not being able to secure a foothold, and gradually wended

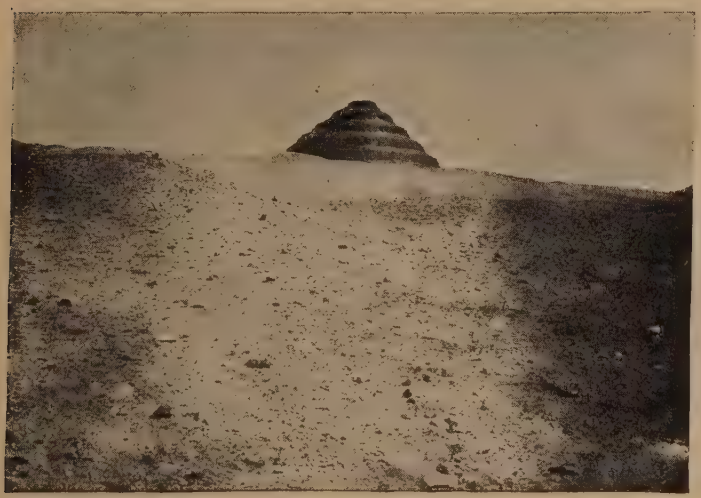


Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE EGYPTIAN DESERT AND THE STEP PYRAMID OF SAKKARA

their way southward. Every Bible student is familiar with the story of how the Hebrews moved into Egypt at the invitation of Joseph.

Egypt a granary for the nations.—Ancient Egypt, because of the inundation of the Nile, was so fertile that it could supply all its own needs and still have grain to dispose of to the surrounding nations. The

part of Palestine nearest to Egypt was stony and infertile, so its inhabitants were frequently exposed to the dangers of famine. At such times it was natural to move nearer to Egypt. The northeastern part of Egypt, where the Hebrews lived so long, was called Goshen. Here with their flocks and herds and semi-agricultural life, they prospered and greatly increased

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

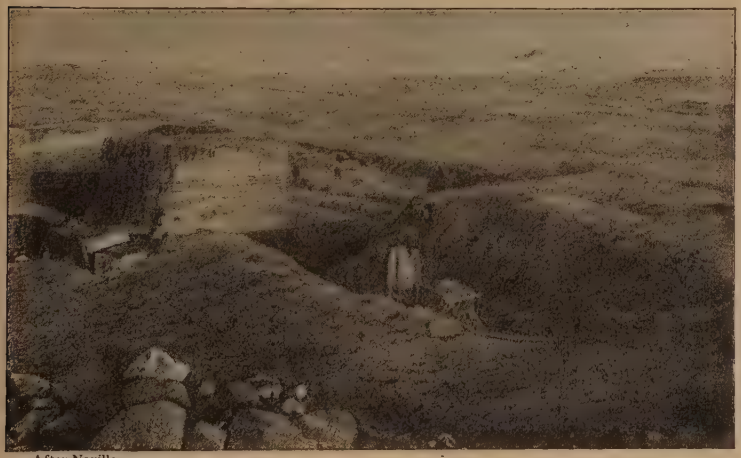
THE NILE

in numbers. The Egyptians did not molest them, and were perhaps glad to have them there as a protection against the marauding bands of the desert. Apparently, they did not mingle much with the Egyptians but kept their own language and customs.

The oppression of the Israelites.—Finally under an unfriendly king, who feared their growing power, they were "mightily oppressed"; that is, they were reduced to slavery. Apparently, this did not suffice to de-

crease their number, for the biblical account says that the Pharaoh ordered all male Hebrew infants put to death, fearing that in case of war the Hebrews would unite with the enemies of Egypt.

Ramses II.—Scholars have long believed that this monarch, who reigned during the thirteenth century B. C., was the Pharaoh of the oppression. For one thing, in Exod. 1. 11 there is mention of two store cities built by the Hebrews—Raamses and Pithom.



After Naville

A STORE-CHAMBER AT PITHOM

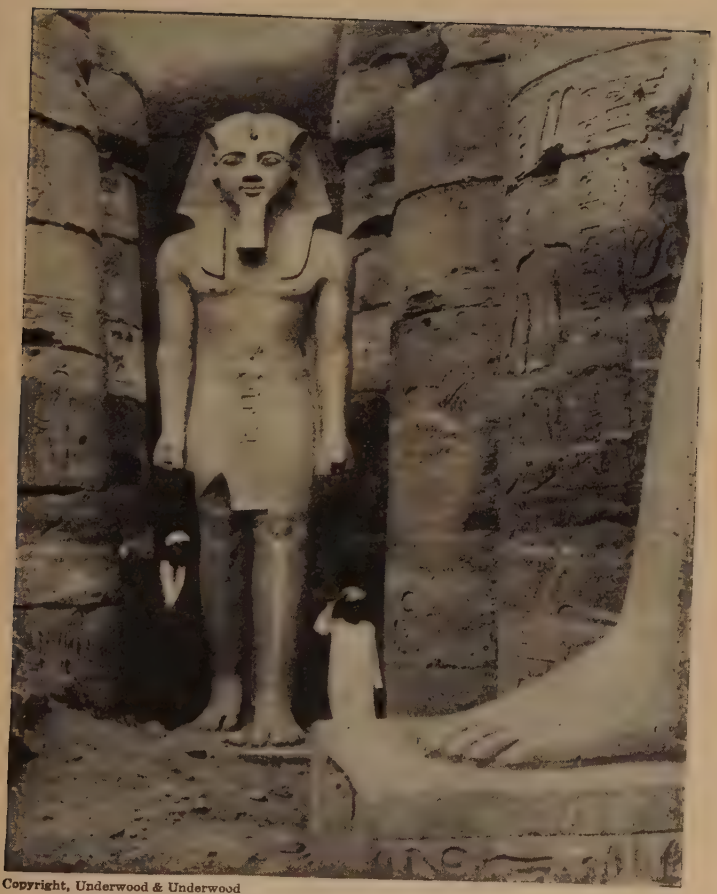
Excavations on the site of these cities have brought to light many things that go toward confirming the biblical account of the stay in Egypt, among them great store chambers at Pithom, evidently receptacles for grain. Remains of a royal residence and a temple built by Ramses II have been discovered there.

Ramses II was a great builder, and filled the country with temples and palaces, and with statues of himself

of colossal size. (One was over ninety feet high.) The many successful campaigns he carried on furnished slaves for the unskilled labor of building. We are told in Exodus that "the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor: and they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field."

In the year 1881 the world was amazed to learn that the mummified bodies of a number of Egyptian Pharaohs had been found[1], and among them that of Ramses II. These bodies had been hidden away near Thebes in a secret chamber, cut in the solid rock, thirty-seven feet below the surface of the ground. Here they had lain for three thousand years, their hiding-place unknown. There are few events in history that equal the dramatic interest of this discovery. The news was flashed all over the world. A great gathering was held when some of the mummies were unwrapped. The Khedive was there, with high officials from many leading countries. When the mummy of Ramses II came to be unwound there was such a scene as the world will not witness again. After verification of the winding-sheet by the Khedive, the wrappings were removed, one by one. When only a single wrapping concealed the features of the haughty monarch who compelled the Israelites to make bricks without straw the excitement grew intense! He was over six feet tall, and his features indicated both strength and cunning. Little did Ramses think that his chief claim to the interest of the world three thousand years after his death would be his connection with the humble slave people whom he abused!

[1] These mummies are now in the museum at Cairo.



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STATUE OF RAMSES II IN THE TEMPLE OF LUXOR

BIBLICAL SOURCES:

The last fourteen chapters of Genesis (37–50), with the exception of 38 and 49. These may be read rapidly and if necessary chapters 39, 40, 41, 46 and 48 may be omitted.

QUESTIONS

1. Name the important periods of Egyptian history and give approximate dates.
2. During which of these periods did the Hebrews come in contact with the Egyptians and in what way?
3. Give the story of their life in Egypt.
4. Why was Egypt a "granary for the nations"?
5. Under what Pharaoh is it believed the Hebrews were oppressed?
6. Give a brief account of Ramses II. In what century did he reign?
7. Though there is no proof outside of the Bible that the Hebrews were in bondage in Egypt, would any race have invented so humiliating a story about itself?
8. Tell the story of the decipherment of the Egyptian hieroglyphics.

NOTE.—The detailed study of the story of Joseph is omitted here because this book attempts to deal with the history of the Hebrews only from the time of their escape from Egypt. The story of Joseph is one of the finest in the Old Testament, and should be familiar to every student.

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MUMMY OF RAMSES II

Now in the Museum in Cairo.

LESSON IV

THE FIRST STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

We cannot help asking why it was that a race starting with no higher religious ideals than were possessed by the nations about them should eventually have given the world its highest conception of God and religion. The starting point must be sought in their remarkable escape from slavery in Egypt, which they attributed to the miraculous intervention of Jehovah. Their leaders constantly reminded them of this, the most important event of their life as a nation, and thus a profound sense of obligation was developed within them, and a desire to serve and obey Jehovah. Their deliverance was effected through the agency of Moses, the greatest of all their leaders.

The birth and childhood of Moses.—According to Hebrew tradition, Moses was born while the edict of the king of Egypt was in force by which all male Hebrew infants were to be put to death. The narrative states that the child Moses was placed on the Nile in a basket in the hope of saving his life and was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, who brought him up as her own son. The Hebrew tradition regarding his education is reflected in Acts 7. 22, "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians."

The loyalty of Moses to his own race.—There must have been every temptation for Moses to ally himself with the Egyptians instead of with his obscure and downtrodden countrymen. The way to preferment and worldly success would naturally be through the

ruling class, yet Moses' sympathies remained with his own race. A great crisis in his life came when one day he saw an Egyptian taskmaster abusing a Hebrew. In his hot indignation Moses smote the Egyptian, but found that he had killed him. The next day, upon discovering that the deed was known, he escaped from the country. This rash act changed the entire course of his life, for, though it was of no immediate benefit to his people, it was a decisive step toward his great work as their champion and deliverer.

Moses in Midian.—He fled to the pasture land of Midian, married the daughter of a priest, and settled down to the life of a shepherd. Uneventful years went by, but Moses was being trained. His contact with the Egyptian court had given him a certain kind of training, but for the making of a prophet something more was needed. The quiet shepherd life, with its lonely musings, reacting on his naturally religious nature, developed within him those qualities which made him the great leader of his race.

His call to be the deliverer of his people.—Unable to forget the sufferings of his race, he was finally conscious of a definite "call" to go and help them. The great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others, described their call from Jehovah under the form of a vision. Moses' vision was that of a burning bush, from which the voice of Jehovah spoke to him. Whatever may have been the experience through which he passed at this time, it is clear that he became conscious of God's will that he should return to Egypt and work for the deliverance of his people. After a severe struggle with himself he obeyed.

The plagues of Egypt.—To the freedom-loving sons of the desert involuntary servitude was intolerable.

Egypt had a countless number of serfs, yet the Hebrews, so far as we know, were the only ones who successfully rebelled against their powerful masters. The first thing we notice about the Hebrews, then, as they appear upon the stage of history, is their free and independent spirit.

Moses asked Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to go a three days' journey to offer sacrifices to their god, but the request was refused on the ground that they could not be spared. Grievous plagues, which were attributed to the wrath of Jehovah, afflicted the Egyptians. The plague that finally induced Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go was the "smiting of the firstborn" in all the Egyptian homes, while the angel of death passed over all Hebrew homes.

The escape.—Having obtained from Pharaoh the permission he had so often sought, Moses led his people out into the desert. The festival ostensibly to be celebrated was doubtless an ancient feast that had long been observed by the Hebrews and their Semitic ancestors, in which all the members of a clan or tribe came together to renew their covenant with their tribal god. In celebrating this feast a lamb was sacrificed and its flesh eaten amidst great rejoicing.

The start was made from Raamses, probably with no definite destination in view, and with only the one thought of escaping from their oppressors. As a fortress guarded the frontier of the Isthmus across which they would naturally have fled, they turned to the south, and reached the Gulf of Suez evidently at a point near the present town of Suez, where it was possible, by crossing an arm of the sea, to pass the fortifications. Here they were overtaken by their oppressors, and escape seemed impossible, but a strong east wind blew

all night with such force that it left the shallow waters low enough to be forded on foot. The Hebrews crossed safely, but when the Egyptians attempted to follow their heavy chariot wheels stuck in the soft mud, the wind changed, and the waters overwhelmed them. The Hebrews always regarded the night of their miraculous escape as their birth-night as a nation. Their feast, the Passover, is still kept as their greatest festival in memory of the time when the angel of death passed over the Hebrew homes.

The historical basis of the narrative.—There are no contemporaneous records in existence, so far as we know, that refer in any way to the escape from Egypt. And yet, no one seriously doubts that certain Hebrew tribes did live for a long time in Goshen, that they were reduced to a condition of slavery, and that they escaped from their oppressors in some way that seemed to them so miraculous as to be regarded ever after as the greatest event in their history.

Merneptah in his old age succeeded his father, Ramses II, about B. C. 1225, and the escape of the Israelites may have taken place in his reign. He inscribed on a pillar an account of his wars and victories, and in this inscription we find the only mention of Israel in very early times. It shows that the Israel referred to was not in Egypt at that time. These are the words relating to Israel:

> "Plundered is Canaan with every evil,
> Israel is desolated, her seed is not;
> Palestine is become a widow for Egypt."

There are many questions connected with the subject of this lesson that belong in the realm of conjecture; as, the number that came out of Egypt, the

probable duration of the sojourn (according to some biblical accounts over four hundred years but according to others only four generations), the tribes involved, etc. We must remember that we are dealing with traditions which were not written down until more than three hundred years after the events they describe.

As we continue our study of the Pentateuch we shall find that there are at least two accounts of all the principal events, and usually three. Sometimes these differ only slightly, but oftener they vary greatly. For example, one account of the escape says that "Jehovah caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night, and made the sea dry land." In another account we read that Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the waters were divided. How does it come about that there are these differing accounts of the early events of Hebrew story? The question is so important that it will be considered in the next lesson, and the thread of the narrative will be resumed later.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Exodus.

The early life of Moses, 1, 2.
His call to deliver his people, 3, 4.
The plagues, 7–10.
The escape, 12–14.
The song of Moses and of Miriam, 15.

QUESTIONS

1. Show how the training of Moses fitted him for his great work.
2. Discuss the ethics of his deed in smiting the Egyptian.
3. What did his loyalty to his own people cost him?
4. Locate Midian on the map.
5. If the stories of the plagues are understood literally, what false ideas of God do we get?
6. Discuss the importance to the future development of the Hebrew race of the deliverance from the Egyptian bondage.
7. In what century did the exodus probably take place?

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THE STELA OF AMENOPHIS III

Raised by Merneptah and bearing the earliest mention of Israel.
Now in the Museum in Cairo.

LESSON V

HOW THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS WRITTEN

As was intimated in the last lesson, the student is likely to be confused by the fact that there are two or more versions of most of the early Old Testament narratives. Indeed, until quite recent times even the greatest scholars could not clearly understand the matter. The honest investigator was obliged to admit that the Old Testament contained many passages that seemed to contradict each other. We are fortunate to live in an age when, through the painstaking labor of devoted scholars, a flood of light has been poured upon the Old Testament and many of these dark places illumined. It is now well understood that these variant narratives were written by different persons, at widely varying times and from diverse points of view. The best authorities all over the world are now in practical agreement as to the *main facts* concerning the development of the Hebrew religion and the date and authorship of the various books of the Old Testament.

The ancient method of writing history.—We cannot understand the Bible without knowing something of how it was written. The ancient method of writing history was very different from the modern. The modern historian goes to original sources, examines facts, verifies dates, etc. Having filled himself full of his subject, he sits down to write, using his own words. The ancient historian worked in a very different manner. In the first place, the ancients had no idea of literary ownership. If a thing seemed to

them true, it made no difference who said it, and they did not hesitate to appropriate it. The nearest analogy to this to-day is our attitude toward mathematical truth. In stating the fact that the sum of the three angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles we do not think of giving credit to the person who first discovered and announced that truth, though there must have been such a person. So they felt in ancient times about all truth, but especially about religious truth. If Jehovah had spoken through one of his prophets, the words must be true, and it mattered not who said them. It was the Greeks who gave the world the idea of literary ownership. (Judaism, however, during the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, became interested in the subject of authorship.)

The Hebrew historian gathered his material, then pieced it together, without marks of separation or indications of authorship. The result is that each of the early historical books of the Old Testament is a composite work, written, not by one man at one time, but by several men at widely varying times. It is fortunate that this is so, for scholars are able to unravel the tangled threads and set each document off by itself. Thus we are able to study each period from the account of it written by those nearest to it in point of time.

The beginnings of modern biblical interpretation. —Until the middle of the eighteenth century very few had seriously questioned the rabbinical tradition that had come down to the Christian Church with regard to the authorship and date of the various books of the Old Testament. A French physician by the name of Astruc, who was also a Hebrew scholar, noticed that in Genesis two different names were used for God, Jahweh (or Jehovah), and Elohim; and that

accompanying each of these were always the same peculiarities of language, style, and ideas. Following up this clue, he discovered that there were two distinct strands woven together, which could be separated, each complete in itself. He published his discovery in 1753, and at once scholars recognized the validity of it. He or his followers traced these strands through the other Pentateuchal books, and most scholars now recognize the composite nature of these books.

The documentary sources of the Pentateuch.—Each of these documents is now designated by a name. The document using the name "Jehovah" is believed to have been written in the southern kingdom, Judah, in the ninth century, B. C., and is known as "J," or the "J" document. One of those employing the name "Elohim" for God is thought to have been written in the northern kingdom in the eighth century B. C., and is known as "E" or the "E" document. These two strands or threads run through most of the first six books of the Old Testament. As scholars went on with their investigations they found that Deuteronomy and other writings from the same point of view could not have been written by either "J" or "E," so a new name was given to that strand, namely, "D." The name for "God" usually found in the strand is the combination Jehovah Elohim, translated "The Lord your (my) God." In Leviticus and other books a fourth writer appears who has much to say about ritual, law, and temple ceremonial; hence he must have been a priest, and is designated by "P." ("P" uses the name "Elohim" for "God"). "D" was written in the seventh century B. C., and "P" in the fifth. In some cases it is clear that a "strand" was not written by an individual but by a group or school of writers.

How present conclusions have been reached.—Scholars have learned these things in numerous ways: 1. By the testimony of language. Different writers have distinctive differences of diction. 2. By historical allusions. If, for example, you find a reference to the Babylonian captivity, you may know the passage was written after B. C. 586. 3. In other ways too numerous to mention, but most of all by different viewpoints and individual peculiarities in style.

Their practical value.—Perhaps one's first thought is that these things are not of interest except to the Bible specialist, but this is a mistake. Even a rudimentary knowledge of how the Bible came to be answers a multitude of questions which the inquiring mind is sure to ask. Discrepancies and inconsistencies are explained and no longer trouble us. For example, it interests us to know that the sacred mountain is always called Sinai by "J" and "P," and Horeb by "E" and "D." According to "J," the name of Moses' father-in-law is Hobab, but "E" calls him Jethro. In the stories of the ill-treatment of Joseph by his brothers at the time he was sold into Egypt, "E" makes Reuben, of the northern tribes, the hero, while "J" attributes the leading part to Judah, of a southern tribe.

"J" represents Jehovah as walking in his garden in the cool of the day, and calling to Adam and Eve. "E," written a hundred years later, has a more spiritual conception of Jehovah. When he wishes to communicate with men he usually sends a messenger, an angel. As it is believed both these narratives were written after the division of the Hebrew kingdom, the common traditions would naturally develop somewhat differently in the two kingdoms.

This subject will be treated at greater length in a

later lesson. All that is necessary at this point is that the student should be able to account in a general way for the discrepancies and apparent contradictions with which he is constantly meeting.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: Compare these parallel passages, noting differences both in style and subject matter.

The Creation. Gen. 1, by "P." Gen. 2. 4b–25, by "J."

The call of Moses. Exod. 3. 2–4a, 5, 7, 8, 16–18; 4. 1–16, 19, 20a, 22, 23, by "J." Exod. 3. 4b, 6, 9–12, by "E."

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the difference between the ancient and the modern method of writing history.
2. In what language was the Old Testament written?
3. Give an account of the discovery made by Astruc with regard to the nature of the Pentateuch.
4. By what names are the chief documents of the Pentateuch distinguished?
5. Give a general idea of how scholars have arrived at their present conclusions.
6. How do these discoveries help us to understand the Old Testament?

NOTE.—Those who wish to pursue the subject of this lesson further are referred to *Hastings's Bible Dictionary*, p. 346, or E. S. Brightman, *The Sources of the Hexateuch.*

LESSON VI

THE COVENANT AT SINAI

After escaping from their oppressors the Israelites hurried out into the desert, though what route they took is not known. It was once believed that they journeyed to the south, and the traditional Mount Sinai (*Jebel Musa*, the "mountain of Moses") is in the southern part of the Sinaitic peninsula. So holy has this mountain been regarded that ever since the sixth century A. D. a convent has stood there. There is no trustworthy authority for this site, however, and there are good reasons for believing that Sinai was in the Mount Seir region, on the southern border of Edom. The old location is nowhere near the route as recorded in Exodus, and all the Old Testament references[1] point to a location in the latter region. Moreover, this is the route which Moses would naturally take, having traversed it twice; for he would be sure of the friendliness of the Midianites.

According to Exod. 16. 1, the first stop of importance was at Elim, a large oasis at the head of the Gulf of Akabah, where there were "twelve springs of water and three score and ten palm trees." From Elim the fugitives went to Sinai, and here, according to their traditions, occurred the central event of the Pentateuch, the receiving of the Ten Commandments through Moses and the solemn covenant with Jehovah.

The making of the covenant.—Their later writers believed that here the people in some way powerfully

[1] Deut. 33.2; Exod. 3. 1; 1 Kings 19. 3–8.

felt Jehovah's presence, and that here their first laws were given them under most impressive circumstances. According to the earliest narratives, the mountain is covered with smoke and flame, and quakes violently, while Moses ascends alone to receive the divine message. A different account points to a violent storm, with thunder and lightning. Either volcanic eruption or thunderstorm would be majestic and awe-inspiring to these simple, childlike people of the desert. At the time these accounts were written and for long afterward people never saw the Divine Presence save in the unusual, and to them, miraculous. (May not the same thing be said of a majority of the people in the world to-day?)

In the ancient East the blood-covenant was (and still is among the Arabs) the strongest tie that could bind together individuals or tribes. Two men in establishing a covenant drank their commingled blood. They were then considered the same as if descended from common ancestors, and were bound together by a tie that nothing could break. Tribes made alliances with each other by means of the blood-covenant. It was also believed that a tribe could enter into a covenant with its god or gods. These things help us to understand how natural and how fully in accordance with the usage of the times would be a covenant between the Israelites and Jehovah. We cannot study the history of the Israelites sympathetically, and thus profitably, unless we are able in some measure to get their point of view, and to realize how reasonable to them were many things that seem strange to us. All through these early years the race was in its childhood, and the teaching of children must be concrete, and chiefly by object lessons.

In making the covenant with Jehovah animals were sacrificed and part of the blood was sprinkled upon the people and part upon Jehovah's altar. A sacrificial feast was then eaten, and Moses pledged the people the protection of Jehovah if they would obey his commandments. "And all the people answered together, and said, All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do."

The Ten Commandments.—One of the narratives states that the Ten Commandments were written by Moses at Jehovah's bidding, upon two tablets of stone. Another represents Jehovah as writing with his own finger "ten words" on two tablets of stone, which he gave to Moses. The early Hebrews saw no incongruity in representing God in the form of a man, as all children, even now, think of him. The two tablets were placed by Moses in the ark which tradition says he had prepared for that purpose. Perhaps the earliest commands were given in "ten words" to be remembered easily by the ten fingers.

The Decalogue with which we are all most familiar, as it is the noblest and loftiest of all, is that in Exod. 20. 3–17, but in its present form it belongs to a later period, when the Hebrews had advanced to a settled agricultural life. An earlier Decalogue is found in Exod. 34. 17–26, and should be read at this point in order to learn the nature of the earliest Hebrew legislation of which we have record. We do not, however, know the date of it. It is now recognized by scholars that none of these various law codes of Israel appeared complete in one generation, but that each represents centuries of development in Israel's political and religious life.

It will be seen that the earliest code consists chiefly in a definition of the ceremonial obligations of the

people to Jehovah. What sacrifices shall the worshiper offer, and when and how? There is nothing about morality in this code, nothing about honoring parents, or refraining from covetousness, stealing, or murder. Until the great prophets appeared in the eighth and later centuries it was believed that Jehovah's chief demands were sacrificial gifts and attendance upon sacrificial feasts. In all early religions the chief concern of the gods is that they be placated with gifts. We must not think of the Hebrews as monotheists at this time. Even when the latest Decalogue was written other gods are taken for granted, as is seen from the first commandment. A belief in monotheism came through the teachings of the prophets of the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries, B. C.

The Commandments as a code of morality.— If we look at the most ethical of the Decalogues, that in Exodus 20, from the point of view of the teachings of Christ, we must regard it as rudimentary and incomplete as a code of morality and religion. The precepts of Jesus are chiefly of a positive character, while the Commandments are largely negative. The earliest Hebrew laws were adapted for the stage of civilization in which they originated and were instrumental in preparing the people for a higher code.

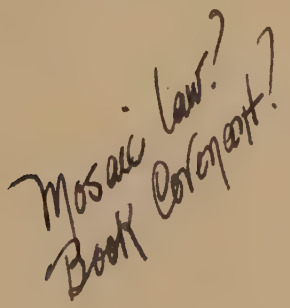
Though the "ethical" code was not committed to writing until several hundred years later than the period we are now studying, its growth was very gradual. The Hebrews very early began to conceive of Jehovah as possessing a moral character wanting in the gods of other nations. He was both just and compassionate. He had delivered them from their terrible Egyptian bondage and he could be trusted for the future. This belief in the *moral character of Jehovah* became the

means of elevating their own character. Throughout all their later history the strongest appeal their leaders could make to them was that they must obey Jehovah because he brought them up out of Egypt. Eventually their humanitarian laws surpassed those of all their contemporaries. "A sojourner shalt thou not wrong, neither shalt thou oppress him; for ye were sojourners in the land of Egypt."

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Exodus.
The beginning of the journey, 15. 22–27.
The revelation at Sinai, 19.
The covenant with Jehovah, 24. 3–18.
The oldest Decalogue, 34. 17–26.
The Ten Commandments, 20. 3–17.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the probable location of Mount Sinai? The traditional site and why rejected?
2. Trace on the map the probable route of the Israelites across the desert.
3. What is a blood-covenant? Show its importance in the ancient East. Where is it still practiced?
4. Relate two accounts of the giving of the commandments.
5. In what important way does the latest Decalogue differ from the earliest one?
6. Commit to memory the Decalogue found in Exod. 20. 3–17.



LESSON VII

WANDERINGS IN THE WILDERNESS

The book of Exodus relates the history of Israel as later writers believed it to be from shortly before the birth of Moses to the second year after the escape from Egypt. After the first fifteen chapters the book is largely given up to the life in the wilderness and the construction of the tabernacle. The book of Numbers forms the sequel to Exodus and is supposed to cover the period from the time of leaving Sinai until the arrival on the plains of Moab. The book derives its name from several "numberings" of the people.

The training of the wilderness.—From Mount Sinai the route is difficult to trace, but the Israelites eventually came to Kadesh-barnea, and this place was their headquarters for a generation. If it had been their purpose to go directly to Canaan, as their later writers believed, there were sufficient reasons why this plan was impossible. That country was inhabited by energetic, hostile tribes, with whom they would not be able to cope. The Canaanite towns were inclosed by walls which are shown by recent excavations to have been of remarkable height and strength. The Israelites, so recently from the desert, had no means of attacking such towns; moreover, they were utterly lacking in military training.

There was nothing left for them to do but to find subsistence for themselves as best they could in the more fertile parts of the desert. The time spent in the desert was one of the most valuable periods in Israel's

training. They had come up out of Egypt an ignorant, discouraged people, cowed by the cruel usage they had received and wholly without organization. Their desert life taught them resourcefulness, endurance, courage, and dependence upon Jehovah.

The meaning of the Hebrew word for "wilderness" is "lonely place," a place unoccupied by cities or towns. The wilderness south of Palestine consists of rocky

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

A BEDOUIN ENCAMPMENT

plateaus and jagged mountains, parched and dry, but in the valleys often are found springs of water. These arid wastes encouraged simplicity of life and developed those simple, hardy virtues which characterized the Hebrews later. They constantly moved about, in search of better pasturage for their flocks and herds and more abundant food for themselves. They lived upon a curd made from milk, and upon lichens and other

natural products of the land; sometimes there were quails, and on feast days animals from the herds were eaten.

The life was full of danger. Other nomadic tribes also were trying to wring subsistence from the desert, and the best, most fertile spots were prizes to be fought for. At any time an enemy tribe might swoop down upon them, kill most of the men, and carry off the women and children. Perhaps it is not strange that there were constant complainings on the part of the people, and as we read of them we realize anew the magnitude of the task accomplished by Moses. Whenever anything went wrong they blamed him. They soon forgot the lash of their former masters and the intolerable burdens. They were not willing to pay the price of freedom. "And the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt for nought; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic: but now our soul is dried away." At one time Moses cried to Jehovah: "What shall I do unto this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The patience of Moses was inexhaustible. Like a father he overlooked their faults and treated them as wayward children.

The life at Kadesh.—Kadesh is only about fifty miles south of Beersheba, the southernmost town of Palestine, and, according to Deut. 1. 2, eleven days' journey from Sinai. It is the seat of a remarkable spring, which irrigates a broad valley. Kadesh is not often visited by travelers because it is in the hands of warlike Bedouins. An American traveler, however, Henry Clay Trumbull, then editor of the *Sunday School Times*, visited the place in 1881, and published a description of it. He says[1]:

[1] *Kadesh-Barnea*, p. 272.

"It was a marvelous sight! Out of the barren and desolate stretch of the burning desert-waste we had come with magical suddenness into an oasis of verdure and beauty, unlooked for and hardly conceivable in such a region. A carpet of grass covered the ground. Fig trees laden with fruit nearly ripe enough for eating were along the shelter of the southern hillside. Shrubs and flowers showed themselves in variety and profusion. Running water gurgled under the waving grass, and a stream rippled and cascaded along its narrow bed."

In this attractive spot Moses and other leaders had their permanent abode, and here was the tribunal where Moses "judged" the cases brought to him, and the sanctuary, or "tent of meeting," where all came to bring their offerings to Jehovah.[1]

The organization of the tribes.—At first Moses made decisions in all cases that arose, but later all Israel was organized under "rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens." "The hard cases they brought to Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves."

In this account we discover the relation of Moses to Hebrew legislation, a subject which has been much misunderstood. The decisions of Moses would be regarded as precedents, and in time there would grow up a body of law regulating the life of the nation. If the work of Moses was as here represented, he was truly the lawgiver of the nation, and the germinal principles of all subsequent Hebrew law were due to him. Later generations considered him the author of the entire body of Israelitish law, and even attributed to him the writing of all the books of the Pentateuch. It was not until several hun-

[1]The clans settled at Kadesh were only a minute fragment of what afterward became the people of Israel. H. P. Smith, *Old Testament History*, p. 73.

dred years after the time of Moses, however, that the Israelites came to have a body of *written* law. Custom, always and everywhere, precedes written law, and it was so with the Israelites.

The Tent of Meeting.—From the earliest account, the sanctuary of the desert seems to have been a simple tent of goat's hair, which was pitched outside of the camp. To this tent the people would come to consult Moses as Jehovah's prophet. Joshua was Moses' only assistant in this work. A "veil" was worn by Moses when consulting Jehovah and it is probable that he used the sacred lots, Urim and Thummim, meaning "yes" and "no."

"Now Moses used to take the tent and to pitch it without the camp, afar off from the camp; and he called it, The tent of meeting. And it came to pass, that everyone that sought Jehovah went out unto the tent of meeting, which was without the camp. And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the Tent." This simple story shows how Moses was developing in these childlike people a reverence for Jehovah and for his sanctuary.

Within the tent was the ark of the covenant, which was a box or chest representing Jehovah and containing the two tablets of stone. It was carried on all their journeyings, and it went with them into battle, in accordance with the customs of all their contemporaries. Other nations placed in their arks images of their gods, but the Hebrews seem never to have done so.

Later generations idealized the simple tent of meeting into an elaborate tabernacle, an artistic and costly structure. Yet "If the Tabernacle is an ideal, it is truly an ideal worthy of Him for whose worship

it seeks to provide. In reproducing in portable form, as they unquestionably do, the several parts and appointments of the Temple of Solomon, including even its brazen altar, the author or authors believed in all good faith that they were reproducing the essential features of the Mosaic sanctuary, of which the Temple was supposed to be a replica and the legitimate successor."[1]

BIBLICAL SOURCES:

The organization of Israel, Exod. 18.
The tent of meeting, Exod. 33.
The departure from Sinai, Num. 10.
Life in the Wilderness, Num. 11, 12.
Arrival at Kadesh, Num. 20. 1.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the organization of the tribes as given in Exod. 18.13–27.

2. Discuss the life in the wilderness in the following respects: The nature of the country, means of subsistence, journeyings, hardships and dangers, murmurings of the people against Moses, his character as revealed in his treatment of the people, the benefits gained from the life in the wilderness.

3. Describe Kadesh and locate on map. How far from the southern boundary of Canaan?

4. Are the stories of the wilderness history or tradition? If not history, have they value, and what is it?

5. Describe the "Tent of meeting." Who had charge of it? How did it happen that later ages thought of it as an elaborate tabernacle?

[1] A. R. S. Kennedy, *Hastings's Bible Dictionary*, p. 888.

LESSON VIII

PREPARATIONS FOR ENTERING CANAAN

All the later Hebrew writers believed that the land of Canaan had been divinely granted to their race, and the biblical accounts represent that land as the goal of all their dreams during the wilderness period. It is not likely, however, that at this nomadic stage of their existence they planned very much for the future.

The first attempt to enter Canaan was from the south. Tradition says that Moses sent spies to find out whether the land was good or not and whether well fortified. They brought back the report that the land was flowing with milk and honey, but their account of its fortifications was discouraging. "The people that dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified, *and* very great." Once more all the skill of Moses was needed to keep his people from turning back to Egypt.

The first foothold in Canaan.—The plan of entering from the south had to be given up by the tribes as a whole. Scholars have not yet settled the question whether or not some of them did actually enter Canaan at this time. Nearly a generation later the Hebrew tribes were to be found making their way toward eastern Canaan, which was less strongly fortified. The first foothold was obtained on the eastern border by conquering the Amorites and capturing their chief city, Heshbon. Here the Hebrews settled down, and a gradual transition occurred from the

nomadic to the agricultural mode of life. Their nearest neighbors were the Moabites, who, though not friendly to them, were yet of their own blood. Afterward the two peoples intermarried freely and sometimes made alliances against a common enemy.

From the heights of Moab the Hebrews looked with envy toward the rich land across the Jordan River and awaited their opportunity to go over and

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE HIGHLANDS OF MOAB (MEDEBA)

possess it. The work of Moses, however, was done. He had brought his people to the door of their great opportunity, but he was not to enter with them. A younger man was needed for the arduous task ahead of the tribes, and the choice naturally fell upon Joshua, who had long been under the training of Moses, and had been the leader in several battles. Joshua was

taken to the tent of meeting and there formally commissioned with all the authority possessed by Moses. From this point to the death of Moses the narrative is found in Deuteronomy, a book which is discussed at length in another chapter.

The Song and the Blessing of Moses.—Realizing that he is about to die, Moses is represented as summoning the elders and officers of the people, and delivering to them his parting exhortations. These are found in the so-called Song of Moses, and the Blessing of Moses. In the latter each of the tribes is described, with the part it is to play in the future glory of Israel. The Blessing belongs to an early period, but the Song is much later. Both contain the substance of the message delivered by Moses. We should never lose sight of the fact that the historical parts of the Old Testament were written, not for the purpose of recording events so much as for religious instruction. It should not disturb us to learn that certain portions of the Bible were not written by the authors to whom tradition has attributed them. We do not know and never can know the authorship of many of the books of the Old Testament.

The keynote of the Song may be said to be, "Be strong and of a good courage." The Israelites have their destiny in their own hands. If they will be faithful to Jehovah and obey him, all will go well with them, but terrible will be the punishment following their disobedience. The early Hebrews thought of Jehovah as their tribal god, fighting with them against their enemies, who were always his enemies. It is hardly necessary to say that here and elsewhere throughout the Old Testament words are put into the mouth of Jehovah that represent not the God of the New

Testament but only the primitive idea of God belonging to this time.

The death and burial of Moses.—After the farewell address Moses is represented as ascending Mount Nebo opposite Jericho, where Jehovah shows him the Promised Land. After this first and last view of it he dies in the lonely mountain, and is buried by Jehovah's

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE LAND OF MOAB

own hand in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-Peor, "but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day." Very beautiful and very significant is the story of the burial of Moses. The tradition that he was buried by God's own hand was the noblest tribute that could be paid to him, and shows that at last this truly heroic soul was appreciated and revered for the faithful, loving, and efficient service he had

rendered his people. "And there hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face."

Mrs. Cecil Frances Alexander's poem, "The Burial of Moses," of which the first stanza is here quoted, breathes forth the deep spirit of reverence that has been felt by all succeeding ages for the character and work of Moses:

"By Nebo's lonely mountain,
On this side Jordan's wave,
In a vale in the land of Moab
There lies a lonely grave.
But no man dug that sepulcher,
And no man saw it e'er,
For the angels of God upturned the sod,
And laid the dead man there."

"Between the streams that in these valley bottoms spring full-born from the rocks, and the merry corn-fields in the plateau of Moab above, there are some two thousand feet of slopes and gullies where no foot comes, the rock is crumbling, and utter silence reigns, save for the west wind moaning through the thistles. Here Moses was laid. Who would wish to know the exact spot?"[1]

The historicity of Moses.—What do we know of Moses aside from the biblical record? Absolutely nothing, yet no one has ever seriously doubted that he is a historical character. More than one scholar has expressed the opinion that if the Bible gave no account of Moses, we should have to presuppose such a leader as an hypothesis to account for the remarkable development of the Hebrew race.

[1] George Adam Smith, *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 565.

His achievements.—1. He organized a band of ignorant and discouraged slaves, and in one generation made them competent to cope with the Canaanites who had several hundred years of material civilization behind them.

2. He laid the foundations of a legal system which developed into the most humane and just of ancient times.

3. He organized some of the religious institutions of the Hebrews, and taught them gratitude to their God Jehovah, for their great deliverance, and a desire to follow his guidance.

4. He instilled into the Hebrews a splendid faith in the future greatness of their race, which had much to do with the realization of that greatness.

And he did this in the face of almost insuperable obstacles. He had to contend constantly with the cowardice and childish complainings of his people, and often with the insubordination of tribal leaders. Still he rose triumphant above every adverse condition, and lived to see the work he had striven for accomplished. It may truly be said that he "hewed Israel from the rock." The germs of social justice, of honor and of kindness which were the basis of the teachings of the prophets, and which were later expanded by Jesus into the single Law of Love, all must have had their inception in the work and teachings of Moses.

Biblical Sources:

The mission of the spies, Num. 13.
The victory over the Amorites, Num. 21. 21–27.
The commission of Joshua, Deut. 31. 1–8.
The Song of Moses, Deut. 32. 1–43.
The Blessing of Moses, Deut. 33.
The death and burial of Moses, Deut. 34.

Questions

1. According to their traditions, how did the Israelites obtain their first foothold in Canaan?
2. Point out on the map the location of the Edomites, of the Moabites, and of the Amorites.
3. What have we heard before of Joshua?
4. Give the Hebrew tradition of the death and burial of Moses. How do you account for it?
5. Commit to memory (entire if possible) Mrs. Alexander's poem, "The Burial of Moses."
6. Summarize the achievements of Moses and compare him with some of the greatest men of other nations.

LESSON IX

THE CAPTURE OF JERICHO

THE period we have just completed may be called the *childhood* of the Hebrew race. That upon which we are about to enter, extending from the middle of the twelfth to the middle of the tenth century, B. C., may be termed the *youth* of the race. During this period physical strength and courage were thought of as counting for more than the deeper spiritual qualities that came to be emphasized later. At this time the predominant aim of the Hebrews was to acquire territory and power. In this they were highly successful, but in their methods they did not differ greatly from the nations surrounding them.

The settlement in Canaan.—Traditions of the settlement are found in the books of Joshua and Judges, but the two books present different views of the matter. According to Joshua, the complete conquest of Canaan was made within a decade, by the united tribes under the leadership of Joshua, and through a succession of battles in which the Hebrews were almost always victorious. According to Judges, the conquest extended over a period of more than one hundred years. For the most part the tribes worked independently and without common leadership, and the mastery of the country was gained more by peaceful penetration than by the sword. These narratives in the book of Judges are very early, while the corresponding stories in Joshua reflect a later idealization of the same period. A careful combination of both accounts gives the true

view. In Judges, we have the detailed account of the conquest of Canaan. The aim of the author of Joshua, however, is to teach religious truth.

Canaan at the time of the Hebrew invasion.— What the earliest population of Canaan was we have no means of knowing, but for some centuries before the Hebrews appeared upon the scene the country had been occupied by tribes that may be classified under two heads, namely, the Canaanites, who dwelt in the valleys, and the Amorites, who occupied the hills. We hear much also of other tribes that belonged to the same stock. The name "Canaanite," however, is often applied indiscriminately to all the inhabitants of Canaan.

These various peoples constituted a number of independent states, which were generally at war with each other. The people were agriculturalists but lived in cities, each of which was a petty kingdom. Each city was inclosed by a high and strong wall, and dominated the surrounding country. We know from Egyptian inscriptions and from the El Amarna letters[1] that Egypt had controlled Canaan for several hundred years previous to the thirteenth century. Egyptian rule had been of little benefit to the Canaanites, for its purpose had been only to secure as much tribute as possible.

The idolatrous worship of the Canaanites was accompanied by the most degrading practices. In the arts of civilization, however, they were far in advance of the Hebrews. They had the art of writing, they worked in metals, lived in houses, were practiced in warfare, and those living in the more level districts

[1] Between three and four hundred clay tablets found in 1888 in Amarna, Egypt, many of them written to Amenhotep IV, Pharaoh of Egypt about B. C. 1400, by vassal princes of Canaan. Some of the most interesting of them are from the ruler of Jerusalem, appealing for aid against invaders.

had horses, and chariots of iron. The Hebrews had no training in war, and they lacked the knowledge of the use of metals. Their weapons were probably bows and arrows, clubs, spears, and stone hatchets. They had never lived in houses and knew nothing of the construction of fortifications.

Crossing the Jordan.—As a matter of fact, we have no definite knowledge of how or when the Hebrews entered Canaan, but it is thought to have been not far from B. C. 1150, and from the eastern side. In the book of Joshua there are three accounts of the crossing of the Jordan, all of them more or less confused, and one of them (the latest) highly miraculous. The Hebrew writers regarded the step as only second in importance to the escape from Egypt, and they invested it with much the same halo. It was the casting of the die, the burning of the bridges behind them. All their traditions represent the Hebrews as marching forth to the conquest of Canaan, filled with a sense of their national destiny, and in the full belief that they were following the lead of Jehovah. Without always approving their methods, or believing that it was God's voice they heard in the commands of their leaders, we may yet believe that God was leading them toward the fulfillment of a destiny far greater than they knew.

The Capture of Jericho.—The first city captured by the Hebrews, according to their traditions, was Jericho, near the mouth of the Jordan River. It is not strange they coveted Jericho, which is thus described by George Adam Smith:[1] "Jericho was the gateway of a province, the emporium of a large trade, the mistress of a great palm forest, woods of balsam, and very rich gardens. . . .

[1] *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 266.

Her year is one long summer; she can soak herself in water; and the chemicals with which her soil is charged seem to favor her peculiar products. Five miles in front is a river, which, if she oppose, cannot be crossed; and immediately behind are her own hills, with a half dozen possible citadels. Jericho is thus a city surrounded by resources."

There are two accounts of the capture, the later

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE RIVER JORDAN NEAR JERICHO

one being filled with the miraculous element. In whatever way the city may have been taken, it is clear from the traditions that the capture was an easy one. Reasons why this may have been so are suggested by the authority just quoted:[1]

"The weakness of Jericho was due to two causes. An open pass came down on her from the north, and

[1] *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 268.

from this, part of her water supply could be cut off and the hills behind her could be occupied. But besides this, her people seem never to have been distinguished for bravery; and, indeed, in that climate, how could they? Enervated by the great heat, and unable to endure on their bodies aught but linen, it

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

BRIDGE ACROSS THE JORDAN NEAR JERICHO

was impossible that they could be warriors, or anything but irrigators, paddlers in water and soft earth. No great man was born in Jericho; no heroic deed was ever done in her. She has been called 'The Key' and 'The guardhouse' of Judæa: she was only the pantry. She never stood a siege, and her inhabitants were always running away."

The ethics of the conquest of Canaan.—We cannot escape asking ourselves what moral questions were

involved in the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, so far as it involved the use of force. To what extent was their act like that of a nation to-day that covets the land of another nation and proceeds to take it by the sword? To-day we condemn such an act in the severest terms, and justly claim that those who defend it know nothing of the spirit and teachings of Christianity.

But are the cases analogous? Not at all. We have had nineteen centuries of Christian teaching. All civilized nations to-day know that such a proceeding is an offense against the law of right. The Canaanite conquest occurred more than a thousand years before Christ. It was in a barbarous age when might was almost the only law that was known. There was little fertile land in that barren country, and from time immemorial tribes from the desert had pressed in and fought each other for it. The Hebrews were following the customs of their times. "Arabia has always produced more men than it can nourish. Perhaps in no part of the world is the population so constantly on the verge of starvation. The Bedouin is at the end of the year just where he was at the beginning of the year. . . . That such a people live in a chronic state of warfare is natural."[1] Let us remember also that the Hebrews had a legitimate desire for a national territory, that, even at this time, they were conscious of a great national destiny, and that they had an indomitable faith in the guidance and protection of Jehovah.

So much in their defense. On the other hand, we must not for one moment believe, as many good people

[1] Henry Preserved Smith, *Old Testament History*, p. 74.

have tried to make themselves believe, that the Hebrew leaders always understood God's will. How could God have revealed his entire character in an age of the most rudimentary morality? The Hebrews were often cruel and vengeful and they endowed their God with the same attributes. They often did terrible things in his name. No one would go to Joshua or Judges to learn the nature of God or of true religion. Yet the conceptions of that age were a step and a necessary one in the moral progress of the world.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Joshua.
Crossing the Jordan, 3.
The capture of Jericho, 6.
Hebrew victories over the Canaanites, 10.

QUESTIONS

1. How do the stories of Joshua and Judges differ regarding the conquest of Canaan? Which are more authentic? How do you account for the difference?
2. Give a brief description of Canaan at the time of the Hebrew invasion.
3. Describe the situation of ancient Jericho and show the importance of the city. Why was it never possible to protect it from capture?
4. Discuss the ethics of the Canaanite conquest.
5. What do you think of the idea that the land of Canaan was divinely granted to Israel, and that the wars with the Canaanites were holy wars in which the Hebrews were executing God's will?
6. In this lesson are we studying history or tradition?

LESSON X

THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

THE name "Judges" is applied to the rulers of the Hebrews during the period of their settlement in Canaan. These judges[1] were not magistrates, but natural leaders of the people who assumed command by general consent in times of emergency. "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes." When any tribe was attacked by enemies the tribes of that region would unite for defense. Sometimes they were led to battle by the chieftain of one of the tribes. After peace was restored this leader would become ruler, or "judge," over that part of the land.

The work of the Judges.—We are not to think of any one of the judges as ruling over *all* the tribes. The Hebrews were never united under one leader until the time of Saul and David. It is probable that sometimes two or more judges ruled simultaneously in different parts of the country. The title "Judges" is given to the book of that name because it describes the exploits of the different champions who were the chieftains of various sections of Israelites from the time of the entry into Canaan about the beginning of the twelfth century B. C., up to the time of Samuel, the middle of the eleventh century.

The narratives of Judges are not continuous but are flashlight pictures of important scenes and episodes,

[1] The Hebrew word for "to judge" meant originally to pronounce the divine oracle.

and are very old. Judges is the most valuable book in the Old Testament as source material for the early history of the Hebrews. These stories centered about various tribal heroes, and were doubtless long handed down orally from generation to generation. After the union of the tribes these narratives became the common property of the nation. A later writer, under the influence of the book of Deuteronomy, wove them together, with his own comments and explanations. According to his interpretation of the early history of his people, the Israelites fell away from the worship of Jehovah soon after the death of Joshua, and began worshiping Canaanite gods; Jehovah, indignant, allowed them to be overrun and subdued by their enemies. When, in their distress, they cried to Jehovah, he raised up champions for them (judges), who delivered them; but soon they relapsed again into heathenism. This is repeated in practically the same words with reference to most of the judges.

How the Hebrews obtained their land.—According to the book of Judges, Judah and Simeon were the first to settle in Canaan, in the southern part. There are troublesome questions regarding this point, however, and we know little about the order in which settlements were made. From early times there was a distinct cleavage between the southern tribes under the leadership of Judah and the northern under Ephraim. This was partly because a chain of Canaanite cities separated the two groups. After the reign of Solomon there came complete disruption between north and south.

The seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Judges throw much light on the way the Hebrews obtained homes in Canaan. We read there the ancient and doubtless trustworthy story of how the tribe of Dan secured

a foothold, and how the famous sanctuary of Dan was established. It is a story that reveals very low social and moral standards, and we study it not for spiritual edification but for its historical value.

The tribe of Dan wished to leave their narrow quarters on the borders of Philistia and "sought them an inheritance to dwell in." So they sent five of their men to explore the land, who, on their journey, came to the hill country and passed the night at the house of a man named Micah. Now, Micah had a shrine, with some images (or idols), which had a curious history. He had stolen eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother, but had restored the money to her. She used it in having "a graven and a molten image" made by a founder. Then Micah had a shrine built for the images, and installed as a priest a young man, a Levite, who chanced to come by seeking such employment. Micah paid his priest ten pieces of silver each year, and a suit of clothing and his living. So Micah had his own private sanctuary or chapel.

The next morning, after the five Danites had spent the night at Micah's house and had consulted the oracle through his priest, they went on and came to Laish, "unto a people quiet and secure." The five men then returned to their tribe and advised that they go immediately and take Laish. Six hundred armed men started. On the way as they passed Micah's house they stole his images and compelled his priest to accompany them. Upon reaching Laish they put the inhabitants to the sword and burned the city. "And they built the city, and dwelt therein. And they called the name of the city Dan. . . . So they set them up Micah's graven image which he made." So originated one of the two most famous sanctuaries in northern

Israel. (The other was at Bethel.) The Hebrews at this time saw no incongruity in dedicating to Jehovah an image which they had stolen. They could put to death innocent men, women, and children, whose only offense was that they were living on land which the Danites wanted, and then they could offer sacrifices to Jehovah and believe he was well pleased with what they had done.

The value of the stories of Judges.—Can we learn anything from these stories? Certainly we cannot go to them for ideal teaching in moral or spiritual truth. And yet they are of great value when read understandingly and sympathetically, because of the light they throw upon the development of the Hebrew religion. We should read them having in mind *what the Hebrews afterward achieved.* The Hebrew religion began as other religions have begun, *but it did not end as other religions have ended.* It is not for its beginnings that we value it, but for its later achievements. The Moabites were probably as zealous for their god, Chemosh, as the Hebrews were for Jehovah. But what has become of the Moabites and their religion? Nobody cares. Indeed, the world would hardly know that such a race ever existed had it not been that long ago they once touched the hem of Israel's garment. Most of the nations that seemed at one time to have as promising a future as the Hebrews have gone down into oblivion because they had so little to give to the world. We value even these crude stories of the beginnings of Hebrew history *because of what the Hebrew religion became.*

In our first lesson it was stated that the chief aim in our study must be to find the truth, and that we must follow wherever it leads. Some people do not

like to think that the religion of the Hebrews was a development. They prefer to believe that it was the same in the days of the wilderness wanderings as in the time of the most spiritual of the psalmists. Nothing could be further from the truth. God led these people, step by step, each stage preparing the way for the next. As we study these priceless records of his dealings with the race that more than any other sought to know him and to do his will, we watch these crude beginnings in the light of our knowledge of the twenty-third psalm and the book of Isaiah. Why should anyone be averse to believing that the Hebrew religion in the beginning shared the faults common to all primitive religions?

"All that Israel borrowed from others it so regenerated and stamped with its own identity that it becomes difficult to recognize in the beauteous Israelitish creation and transformation any trace of the original. For this reason one should not be loath to recognize the many foreign elements in the religion of Israel. In so doing we do not lower it, but, quite the contrary, we bear witness to its tremendous, vital power and invincible capacity for assimilation. Israel resembles in spiritual things the fabulous King Midas, who turned everything he touched into gold."[1]

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Judges.

The conquests of Judah and Simeon, 1. 1–10.
The attempted conquests by other tribes, 1. 23–36.
The mission of the judges, 2. 11–23.
Micah and his images, 17.
How the Danites obtained their territory, 18.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the real nature of the "judges" of Israel?
2. How did the Hebrew tribes obtain their land? Show the impossibility of assigning it by lot.

[1] Carl Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 14.

3. How did their ideas of right and wrong differ from our ideas to-day? Give one instance in illustration.

4. If such stories as those in to-day's lesson reveal low moral standards, what is the use of studying them?

5. Should we respect the Hebrew religion less or more because in the beginning it shared the crudities of other primitive religions?

6. Explain the reference to King Midas in the last sentence of the lesson.

LESSON XI

THE SONG OF DEBORAH

THE splendid triumphal ode known as the Song of Deborah has won the admiration of all generations. No war ode or battle hymn in the world surpasses it in fiery energy and true poetic power. It has a wild, rugged beauty never equaled in Israel's later years. Like the earliest poetry of all races, its characteristic marks are simplicity and freshness, vigor and variety. We need not approve of all the morality in it in order to appreciate and enjoy it.

The background.—The subject of Deborah's song is a great battle fought on the plains of Esdraelon between the Hebrews and Canaanites. This battle occurred somewhere near B. C. 1100, and the Song is believed by the best authorities to date back to that time. It is thus the oldest literature in the Bible with the exception of a few poetic fragments, and the most valuable source we have for the study of that period. The Song shows that at that time the Hebrews were settled in the central highlands in a district known as Mount Ephraim; that some of the tribes were in comparative isolation, that the federation between them was loose, and that it consisted chiefly in rallying in time of danger against a common foe. The Song shows that the great Plain of Esdraelon, so important in the subsequent history of the Hebrews, was in the hands of the Canaanites. We know too, from other sources, that their walled cities extended from Jerusalem to Gezer, thus dividing the northern from the southern tribes.

Deborah's song is valuable also because of the light it throws upon early conceptions of Jehovah. He has not yet come to live among his people, but is still thought of as dwelling on Mount Sinai, whence he rushes to their aid in battle. Majestic is the descrip-

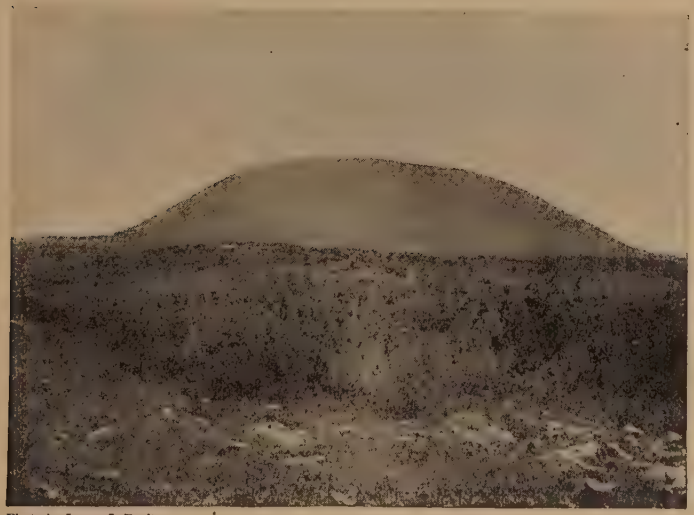


Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

MOUNT TABOR

A mountain in the northeast corner of the Plain of Esdraelon. Here the forces of Deborah and Barak rallied to fight Sisera.

tion of his approach. All nature stands in awe of him, the earth trembles and the mountains quake.

The causes of the battle.—Because of the long-continued oppression of the Israelites by the Canaanites traffic was almost at a standstill: the roads were unsafe, and pedestrians were obliged to steal through byways. Desolation had fallen upon the nation. This oppression had been endured so long because no leader

had risen strong enough to unite the tribes for common defense.

> "The highways were unoccupied,
> And the travelers walked through byways.
> The rulers ceased in Israel, they ceased,
> Until that I Deborah arose,
> That I arose a mother in Israel."

Two versions of the battle.—There is a prose as well as a poetical version of the battle. The prose narrative, found in the fourth chapter of Judges, is later than the poem, found in the fifth chapter. The poem must be regarded as the more authentic, but it is supplemented in important ways by the prose version. Both should be studied and differences noted.

The leadership of Deborah.—According to the poem, Sisera is one of the Canaanite kings who has mustered a number of other kings under his leadership, purposing to break the power of the Hebrews. How near they came to succeeding we learn from both Song and prose narrative. One woman, however, had the religious zeal and the patriotism to summon the tribes together in defense of the nation. She put into them her own courage and fiery, patriotic spirit. Deborah, called a prophetess because supposed to be inspired by Jehovah, dwelt between Ramah and Bethel, and there, as she sat beneath her palm tree, the people came to her "for judgment"; that is, to have their cases arbitrated. As there were no courts it was the custom to bring disputes to some person renowned for wisdom. The title "judge," in the sense of the book of Judges, belongs to Barak. Deborah must have been a woman of extraordinary power, for only such a woman could have become a leader in those stormy times.

The muster of the tribes.—According to the poem, six tribes answered the summons. Fierce is the indignation expressed against those "who came not to the help of Jehovah."

Reuben sat

"... among the sheepfolds
To hear the pipings for the flocks."

Dan remained in his ships, and

"Asher sat still at the haven of the sea,
And abode by his creeks."

The highest praise is given to Zebulun, "a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death."

Out of a possible forty thousand fighting men Deborah's influence gathered together ten thousand. She sent for Barak, captain of the tribe of Naphtali, and directed him to lead the army into battle. Said the timid Barak, "If thou wilt go with me, then will I go; but if thou wilt not go with me, I will not go." "I will surely go with thee," said Deborah, "notwithstanding, the journey that thou takest shall not be for thine honor; for Jehovah will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman."

The battle and its importance.—The Canaanites chose to fight on level ground because of the opportunity it gave for the maneuvering of their chariots. The Hebrews did not even have shields and spears, but only such rude implements as they could fashion without the art of working in metals. As the Canaanites far surpassed the Hebrews in numbers as well as in weapons, it seemed as if their fate were sealed. But as the armies were facing each other suddenly a violent rainstorm occurred which was the means of giving

the victory to the Hebrews. The river Kishon overflowed its banks and became a raging torrent, covering the entire plain and making it a mass of mud. The horses plunged madly about, the wheels of the chariots sank in the soft earth, and the foe was completely put to rout. To Jehovah the Hebrews gave all the credit.

"From the heavens fought the stars,
From their courses they fought against Sisera."

That is, the heavenly bodies that rule the seasons and

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE KISHON BRIDGE NEAR ACCO

the weather helped the Hebrews against Sisera by flooding the Kishon.

To the tent of Heber the Kenite Sisera fled, but Heber's wife, Jael, was friendly to the Hebrews. So Sisera escaped out of the hands of one woman only

to fall into those of another. He was killed by Jael after he had accepted the hospitality of her tent and intrusted his life to her keeping.

This battle was one of the most important of early Hebrew history. If it had been lost to the Hebrews, they might have been absorbed by their conquerors and never have been known to us. It is because of this, and not because we think the Hebrews were always right and their enemies wrong, that we share Deborah's feeling of exultation in the victory.

The study of the poem.—Deborah's song should now be studied as a literary whole. Note that all unnecessary details are omitted and the artist touches only the "high places." First, notice the units into which the poem naturally divides itself. Many think it was sung antiphonally. What evidences are there of this? Reference has already been made to the conception of Jehovah. With what dignity and majesty he is described! What a glowing tribute of praise is given to the tribes that came to the rescue! what bitter words of scorn for those who refused to come! The mustering of the clans takes place before our eyes: we can hear the hoof-beats of the horses and the clash of arms, as

> "The kings came and fought;
> Then fought the kings of Canaan,
> In Taanach by the waters of Megiddo."

No poem has greater variety. Notice the frequent breaks in the thought, when the author turns aside to address Jehovah, or absent persons thought of as present. How much these add to the artistic effect! But perhaps the finest touch in the entire poem is the little glimpse we are given of Sisera's mother. After

the battle the scene suddenly changes, and through the lattice in her son's palace we see her anxiously peering forth, waiting for the son who will never return. The author was a consummate artist. Before, Sisera was nothing to us, or worse than nothing, as the arch-enemy of Israel. Now he is a human being, with a mother who loves him. Our pity is aroused by this "touch of nature" and our enjoyment of the poem enhanced.

Its authorship.—Was Deborah the author? She may well have been. In a day when it was no little thing for a woman to rise to a place of importance she became the leader of her people. If the Song was composed by an eyewitness, as scholars generally believe, who was so able as she to create it? Notice also the prominence given to women—Deborah, Jael, and Sisera's mother.

The text of the Song of Deborah is very imperfect, and there are many passages the meaning of which is doubtful.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Judges.

The prose story of the battle, 4.
The Song of Deborah, 5.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the conditions in Canaan before the battle.
2. Locate the Plain of Esdraelon, Mount Ephraim, and Mount Seir.
3. Who was Sisera? Barak? Jael?
4. Name the tribes that were summoned and failed to come. What was the probable reason for the failure?
5. Describe the equipment of the enemy; the probable equipment of the Hebrews; the numbers on the Hebrew side according to the Song.
6. Explain "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera."
7. Point out some differences between the poetical and the prose version of the story.
8. Discuss the character of Deborah as revealed by the poem.
9. Give some reasons why the Song of Deborah is a great poem.

LESSON XII

GIDEON THE TRIBAL CHIEF

It is perhaps a generation later than the time of Deborah and Barak. The Hebrews are now masters of central Canaan, though there is as yet little unity or coherence among them. They are still "mightily oppressed," but not so much now by the Canaanites as by the marauding desert bands. To these bands many Hebrew villages are obliged to pay tribute as the price of immunity from attack.

Most troublesome of all these enemies are the Midianites, roving Bedouins of the desert south and west of Palestine. The Hebrews are now semiagriculturists, but their crops are hardly ripe when the Midianites come and plunder them. These depredations have continued seven years, because no strong leader has appeared who is able to lead the Israelites against their enemies. "And Israel was brought very low because of Midian; and the children of Israel cried unto Jehovah." At this crisis Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh, is raised up as deliverer of his people. He is evidently a man of great influence in central Palestine, simple and straightforward, and very religious. One of his earliest deeds is the destruction of an altar of Baal, which act comes near costing him his life, and the erection of an altar to Jehovah in its place.

The call of Gideon.—As Gideon and his father are threshing wheat, not on the threshing-floor, which was always in an exposed position, but in the wine-press, that they may be concealed from the Midianites, the

angel of Jehovah appears and commands Gideon to go forth and save Israel. Gideon at once goes for a present to offer his guest. The passage that follows is very important because it shows clearly the ancient idea of sacrifice. Part of the sacrificial meal was eaten by the worshiper and the part intended for Jehovah was burned. Thus they shared their meal with him, and their covenant with him was renewed.

"And Gideon went in, and made ready a kid, and unleavened cakes of an ephah of meal: the flesh he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot, and brought it out unto him under the oak, and presented it." The visitor is really Jehovah himself, as we soon learn. He does not eat the food, as in the story of Abraham and the three heavenly visitors (Gen. 18. 8), but he touches it with his staff and at once fire consumes it.

Gideon and the three hundred.—According to the narrative, when the Midianites make their next raid Gideon raises an army of thirty-two thousand to meet them. But Jehovah requires him to reduce the number lest the coming victory may be an occasion of boasting to the Hebrews. "Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead. And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand." The number is still too many, and Jehovah demands another sifting. By test of their caution, shown by the way they drink[1] at the spring, Gideon reduces his army to three hundred. "And he divided the three

[1] Many explanations of this method of sifting Gideon's men have been given. Probably the most satisfactory one is that the three hundred took the water up in their hands and lapped as a dog laps. The others bent down on their knees and drank from the stream, thus putting themselves in a defenseless position.

hundred men into three companies, and he put into the hands of all of them trumpets, and empty pitchers, with torches within the pitchers."

At this point two traditions are combined. According to one, a panic was produced among the enemy by the simultaneous breaking of the pitchers and flashing of the lights. According to the other, the same result was secured by the blowing of trumpets and shouting. "And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands, and the trumpets in their right hands wherewith to blow; and they cried, The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon." The Midianites fled in the one direction open to them, believing themselves to be pursued by a great army. Gideon pursued them across the Jordan and punished them. It would seem from this part of the story that he was partly influenced by the idea of blood-revenge in his attack on the Midianites, for some of his brothers had been killed by the Midianite chiefs.

These stories of Gideon are among the best known in the Bible, and in spite of their crude moral and religious ideals they furnish inspiration for to-day. Is it not still true that a little band of dauntless, determined, courageous people is far better for the accomplishment of any good work than many times their number, most of whom are "fearful and trembling"?

Gideon's idol.—One of the many evidences of Gideon's piety is the fact that he had an idol made of seventeen hundred shekels[1] of gold obtained from the earrings of the captive Midianites. Later times utterly condemned the worship of Jehovah by means

[1] A shekel of gold was worth about ten dollars (intrinsic value). Its purchasing power would be many times that amount to-day.

of images, but at this time it was customary. A shrine was built for Gideon's idol in his own city, Ophrah, and here he lived to old age surrounded by his many wives and children, probably holding the office of "judge," as he is named among the judges of Israel. The men of Israel are represented as saying to Gideon after the successful war with the Midianites, "Rule thou over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also," an invitation which Gideon declined. This is the first recorded attempt among the Hebrews to establish an hereditary ruler. The kingship offered to Gideon was probably only that over his own tribe of Manasseh.

The evil reign of Abimelech.—Among the many evils of the time none was more harmful in its effects than the institution of polygamy. One of Gideon's many wives was a Canaanite woman of Shechem, mother of his son, Abimelech. This woman and her son always lived in Shechem, with her people, and Abimelech grew up as a Canaanite rather than as an Israelite. At the death of Gideon he represented to the Shechemites the advantage his kingship would give them. With their aid and that of a band of hired assassins he slaughtered all of his seventy half-brothers but one, Jotham, who hid himself. Abimelech seized the kingship and held it by means of the most cruel tyranny, for several years, a period of rivalry, dissension, and bloodshed. Abimelech met his death at the hands of a woman, who threw a millstone down upon him while he was besieging a city.

Thus ended Israel's first experiment in kingship, for at Abimelech's death no attempt was made to continue it. There was not yet sufficient coherence among the Israelites to make a monarchy possible.

GIDEON THE TRIBAL CHIEF

The process of amalgamation with the Canaanites that was steadily going on is illustrated in the case of Gideon and his family. Hebrews and Canaanites lived side by side, both cultivating the soil, intermarried, and often worshiped at the same sanctuary. The religious conceptions were crude when so great a leader as Gideon worshiped Jehovah by means of an idol.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Judges.

The oppression of the Midianites and call of Gideon, 6.
Pursuit of the Midianites, 7, 8.
Abimelech's conspiracy, 9.

QUESTIONS

1. How have conditions in Canaan changed since the time of Deborah? what progress have the Hebrews made? who are now their oppressors?
2. Give an account of the "call" of Gideon, and his treatment of the angel of Jehovah.
3. From this story what do we learn of the ideas of God held by the Hebrews in early times? of their manner of offering sacrifices?
4. Give an account of Gideon's attack on the Midianites.
5. What are Gideon's most prominent characteristics?
6. Why did Israel's first attempt at kingship fail?

LESSON XIII

THE EXPLOITS OF JEPHTHAH AND SAMSON

JEPHTHAH was a Gileadite warrior, who was driven out of his father's home by his half brothers. He then became an outlaw in the land of Tob, gathering about him a lot of "vain fellows" who led a free-booter's life. His energy, force, and physical prowess, however, were not forgotten in Gilead, and when that land was threatened with attack by the Ammonites, the elders of Gilead invited him to return and help them against the foe. He haughtily consented to do so only on condition that, if he should win, he should be their chief. To this they gladly agreed.

Jephthah's vow.—As he starts on the expedition Jephthah makes a vow to Jehovah that if he is victorious he will offer up in thanksgiving "whatsoever cometh forth from the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon." He defeats the enemy, and on his return, his young daughter, an only child, comes out joyfully to welcome her father, playing the tambourine and dancing. Jephthah is filled with consternation and grief. Yet would not his daughter seem the most likely person to come forth to meet him? He rends his garments and bemoans his fate. Just at the time of his greatest happiness all the joy of life is taken away from him. So great is his religious earnestness that he does not for a moment think of refusing to keep his vow. "I have opened my mouth unto Jehovah, and I cannot go back." Rather than break his vow he sacrifices his well-beloved daughter, his only child.

That Jephthah intended a human sacrifice is clear from the way the vow is worded. All primitive nations, so far as we know, have, at least at times of great stress and emergency, offered human sacrifices. The idea underlying this horrible practice is that the more costly the sacrifice, the better pleased Deity will be and the more likely to intercede on behalf of the worshiper. Of course a human life is the most valuable thing that can be offered. Even at a far later period human sacrifice was not unknown among the Hebrews in time of emergency.[1]

The spirit in which Jephthah's daughter meets her terrible doom calls forth our admiration, and reminds us of the similar spirit shown by the noble Jonathan, when his father, Saul, proposes offering him as a sacrifice in fulfillment of a vow. She feels that through her father's vow her people have been saved from their powerful enemies, and that his promise to Jehovah must be kept. So she goes willingly to her unnatural and untimely death. Tennyson, in his "Dream of Fair Women," has given us an idealized picture of

> "The daughter of the warrior Gileadite,
> A maiden pure . . . that died
> To save her father's vow."

It is significant that the writer of the story in Judges does not disapprove of Jephthah's deed. To him the chief pathos of it is that the death of his daughter cut off from Jephthah his hope of descendants—the worst misfortune that could befall one.

Our modern advanced religious conceptions are the result of a long, slow process of development, in which

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[1] Gen. 22; 2 Sam. 21. 6–9; 2 Kings 16. 3; 17. 17; Ezek. 20. 26; Micah 6. 7; Jer. 7. 31; Psa. 106. 37, 38.

the Hebrew race, under God, played the leading part. While the faith of the early Hebrews was narrow, it was intense. Even the rude, cruel tribal heroes of Judges have a zeal and a devotion to the cause of Jehovah as they understand it, that is bound to lead to something better as the race becomes more enlightened.

The stories of Samson.—These stories are almost the only ones in the Old Testament that correspond to the folk-tales of other nations. According to them, Samson was a popular hero whose chief characteristic was his prodigious strength, combined with a grim humor and a capricious recklessness. The heroes of other nations almost all have been remarkable for physical prowess and feats of skill and daring. The Hebrew heroes, however, are usually distinguished rather for their moral and spiritual qualities. Samson owes his place among them to the fact that he killed so many Philistines, at that time the most dangerous foes of the Hebrews. Yet Samson did this in no spirit of patriotism, but in revenge for personal grievances. He has often been compared with the Greek hero Hercules.

The Philistines and their country.—Samson lived in the latter part of the period of the Judges, in southwest Palestine, in the old territory of the tribe of Dan. This territory borders that of the Philistines, a warlike people who had come from across the sea, probably from Crete, shortly before the Hebrews began the settlement of Canaan. The land they seized was a narrow, fertile strip, west of Canaan and bordering the Mediterranean Sea. The Philistines were a non-Semitic race who eventually adopted the language and most of the customs of the Canaanites. They were much superior to the Hebrews in the arts of civil-

ization, with better weapons and implements of all kinds. The great highway between Egypt and the Euphrates passed through the chief cities of Philistia. Eventually the Philistines became the most formidable enemies of the Hebrews.

The nature of the Samson stories.—The Hebrews were greatly amused by the humorous stories of Samson, with his riddles and feats of strength. As they were handed down from one age to another they lost nothing of the marvelous in the retelling. The riddle of the lion and the bees, the tying of firebrands to the tails of the foxes, the killing of a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass, the carrying off of the gates of Gaza, and the pulling down of the Philistine temple over the heads of Samson's enemies—all these were told again and again at the social gathering places of the people, and delighted generation after generation.

Samson's death.—Through the treachery of the last of his several wives, Delilah, who was offered a large bribe, Samson was betrayed into the hands of the Philistines, who blinded him and set him to do slave's work grinding corn in a treadmill. His death is invested with a certain dignity. Brought from prison to the temple of Dagon to make sport for his tormentors, he pulled down the two pillars on which the roof rested, thus killing himself, and, according to the tale, about three thousand Philistines.

Though it is said that Samson "judged Israel twenty years," there is no evidence that he ever held the office of judge. He never appears as a leader of his people; on the contrary, he is disowned by his neighbors of Judah. (See Judges 15. 11–13.)

Samson's life was one of wasted opportunity. He stands as an example, to use Milton's words, of "Im-

potence of mind, in body strong." With his enormous strength he might have become the champion and defender of his people, but his ambition never rose above the gratification of his own selfish desires.

Saint-Saens' opera, "Samson and Delilah," and Milton's "Samson Agonistes" are both founded upon biblical accounts of Samson. In both he is much idealized.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Judges.

Jephthah chosen leader of the Gileadites, 11. 1–11.
Jephthah's vow, 11. 29–40.
The struggle with the Ephraimites, 12. 1–7.
The Samson stories, 14; 15. 9–20; 16.

QUESTIONS

1. Where is Gilead?
2. Give the story of Jephthah's vow.
3. What is the idea underlying human sacrifice? (From this point onward, watch for every reference to human sacrifice among the Hebrews, and learn how their great teachers gradually led them to higher conceptions.)
4. Can you give instances of human sacrifice among other nations? (Compare the Greek story of Iphigenia. In what ways is the Hebrew story on a higher plane?)
5. Give the most important of the Samson stories.
6. Has Samson any redeeming qualities? Was he a patriot? Explain how such a man could find a place among the heroes of the Hebrews.
7. Describe the Philistines and their country. (The name "Palestine" comes from "Philistia.")

LESSON XIV

A SURVEY OF THE PERIOD OF THE JUDGES

As we close the period of the Judges it will be well to take a glance backward to see what has been achieved by the Hebrews since entering Canaan. They are now practically masters of the country, though there are strongholds still in the hands of the Canaanites; and the powerful Philistines on the west are a constant and increasing menace. The central tribes (Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh) are separated from the northern (Issachar, Zebulun, Naphtali, Asher, and Dan) by the Plain of Esdraelon and from the southern (Judah and Simeon) by a chain of Canaanite cities extending from Jebus to Gezer. The fourth group, Reuben and Gad, occupy the southern part of the country east of the Jordan. In New Testament times these divisions were called Samaria, Galilee, Judæa, and Peræa.

We know little of the chronology of the period of the Judges. If we are content to accept the book as a collection of flash-light pictures revealing with unsparing accuracy the primitive conditions of the times, we shall find it of absorbing interest. We shall learn from it how a group of tribes only one generation removed from slavery entered a hostile land and made a place for themselves, how their devotion to their God, Jehovah, kept them from being absorbed by the surrounding peoples, and how they impressed their racial characteristics upon these peoples so that in the end

the Hebrews were the dominant race. We shall understand the reason for their crude conceptions of morality and religion, and shall not expect to find overmuch spirituality in their worship.

At the beginning of this period the Hebrews are nomads, wandering from place to place with their flocks and herds, tents their only shelter. At its close they are agriculturalists, possessing fields and vineyards, and living in houses. In all respects life has changed for them, and in most ways they are far better off than they have ever been before.

Social customs.—The poorer people live in one-room mud huts, shared by the cattle, the wealthier in sunbaked brick houses with flat roofs. The poor sleep on dry leaves or rushes on the floor, covering themselves at night with the outer garment worn during the day. Their clothing is a tunic without sleeves and reaching to the knee, an upper garment usually of woolen cloth or sheepskin, and sandals. Earrings and other ornaments are worn both by men and women.

The food is chiefly bread, baked in earthen ovens, the grain being ground by women in handmills made of two stones. They also have vegetables, fruits, honey, and the products of the flocks and herds. Their dishes and utensils are of wood or clay, though they soon acquire from the Canaanites the art of working in metals, from whom also they learn how to make simple pottery. They now live in villages, but a little later have walled cities. From the first they have freely mingled with the Canaanites and intermarried with them. "And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites: and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave

their own daughters to their sons and served their gods."

Government.—Social responsibility begins in the nomadic life through membership in the clan. The individual can survive only through loyalty to this group. Within the clan the spirit is democratic, all standing on an equality. All have voice in the affairs of the clan through the heads of families. At the head of each clan is a chieftain. A number of such clans form a tribe, and at the head of the tribe is a chief, or sheikh, who holds his position by natural powers of leadership. The office is not hereditary.

As at first the Canaanites are in possession of all the arable land of the valleys, the Hebrews live in the hill country, but at the close of the period of the Judges they have secured a foothold in the more fertile parts of the land. The "twelve tribes of Israel" is a more or less artificial enumeration. Constant changes are going on. Some tribes (as Simeon) disappear early and subtribes are occasionally formed.

Written law.—We do not know how early the Hebrews began to have written laws. Custom always precedes written law, as we have learned. It is possible but not probable that some of the earliest laws had been reduced to writing at this time.

Moral and religious conditions.—The struggle for a country of their own, when "every man's hand is against them" has developed in the Hebrews hardihood, courage, and initiative, but not the more refined virtues. Such stories as that of the founding of the sanctuary at Dan with a stolen image, of Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter, of Gideon's idol, and of Samson's deeds of violence, show how long is the road the race will have to travel before arriving at any high conception

of religion and morality. The law of blood-revenge[1] fosters cruelty and injustice, for the innocent are constantly made to suffer for the guilty just because they happen to belong to the same clan.

There is no central place of worship at the close of the period. The ark is kept in a house instead of in a tent—at Shiloh. That in the opinion of later writers there were godly, devout men and women at this time is illustrated by the story of Hannah and her husband, Elkanah, at the beginning of the book of Samuel; but many Hebrews have adopted Canaanite sanctuaries or "high places," with their altars and asherim (sacred posts). Not yet have the Hebrews been greatly contaminated by the immoral practices of the Canaanites, as we shall find them to be at a later period. Great progress is now possible in the arts of civilization, which they learn from their neighbors. With their settled life they now have the opportunity to develop the peculiar genius of their race.

Jehovah has been thought of as having his abode upon Mount Sinai, but at the close of this period is regarded as the god of Palestine. The Hebrews have an unshakable belief that the land has been divinely promised to their race, and that the wars of conquest are the work of Jehovah, as is illustrated in the war-cry, "For Jehovah and for Gideon."

Literature of the period.—As yet the Hebrews have no literature except songs and poems handed down orally. Most of these have been lost to us, but we need nothing more than the Song of Deborah to real-

[1] The practice of blood-revenge has been very general at a stage of civilization before there is definitely established and properly executed law. It was common among the ancient Semites and is among the Arabs to-day. All the members of a clan are considered as of one blood, and a wrong done to one is regarded as an injury to all, which must be avenged. Sometimes in such a feud the warring clans are almost exterminated.

ize how rich was the race in poetic gifts. Up to the present the struggle for existence has been too severe for the thoughts of the people to turn to literature, which is usually produced only after the establishment of settled habits of life. To this period probably belong:

Lamech's Sword Song,	Gen. 4. 23, 24.
The Song of the Well,	Num. 21. 17, 18.
A Song of Triumph,	Exod. 15. 1–18.
The Song of Deborah,	Judg. 5.
Jotham's Fable,	Judg. 9. 8–15.
Samson's Riddles,	Judg. 14, 15, 16.

There are traditions concerning the creation of the world, the origin of the Hebrew race, the relationship of tribes, the beginnings of certain customs and institutions, the deeds of heroes, etc., but these have not yet been put into writing.

QUESTIONS

1. With map in hand trace the location of the various tribes according to the belief of later writers. Name the four groups and the tribes comprising each group.
2. Describe the mode of life of the Hebrews at this time.
3. What is a clan? a tribe? (Look up in a reference book.)
4. Why did the feeling of responsibility extend only to the members of the clan or the tribe?
5. What qualities were developed in the Hebrews by their long struggle for a home?
6. Describe the moral and religious conditions among them during this period.
7. What was the nature of the literature produced up to this time? Name several very early poems.
8. Show that the period of the Judges was one of progress, not of retrogression.

LESSON XV

THE GROWING POWER OF THE PHILISTINES

The books of Samuel, of unknown authorship, owe their title to the fact that in the early chapters Samuel is the most prominent figure and chiefly responsible for the selection of the first two kings of Israel. This twofold book contains some of the best historical writing in the Old Testament, vivid, picturesque, and of fine literary style. Parts of the book date back almost or quite to the events they describe and are considered by scholars entirely trustworthy as historical documents. The period of time covered by the book is about one hundred years, from shortly before the birth of Samuel to the close of David's reign. During this period the Hebrews gradually emerged from the unsettled and stormy times of Judges and attained the organization, unity, and settled life of the reign of David. The Philistines were their chief enemies until they were finally conquered by David, and it was the Philistine menace that brought about the monarchy. Up to the beginning of this period the history of the Hebrews has been more or less vague. Now it begins to be clearer.

The sanctuary at Shiloh.—As the book opens we are introduced to the sanctuary at Shiloh, which has evidently been for some time an important place of worship. It is clear that religion is becoming more orderly. The ark is in a house, not a tent (1 Sam. 3. 3). People go there to offer sacrifices, and we learn exactly the manner of offering them. The priests live in part from

the offerings of the worshipers (1 Sam. 2. 13–16). Eli is judge and priest, but he is aged, and his two unworthy sons officiate.

Hannah and the infant Samuel.—One of the most charming stories in the Bible is that of the infant Samuel, and his "call" to serve Jehovah. Hannah and her husband Elkanah go up to Shiloh once every year to offer

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

SHILOH

sacrifice. Hannah, sorrowing because she is childless, prays to Jehovah, "If thou wilt . . . give unto thy handmaid a man-child, then I will give him unto Jehovah all the days of his life." Jehovah hears her prayer and the little Samuel is born to her. Read carefully her beautiful Song of thanksgiving, which is really a psalm, and compare it with the Magnificat, which Saint Luke gives (1. 46–55) as the song of thanksgiving

of Mary, mother of Jesus. The Magnificat is largely modeled on the Song of Hannah.

While Samuel is still very young his mother takes him to the sanctuary at Shiloh, and dedicates him to Jehovah, leaving him there to grow up under the instruction of the priest, Eli. "Moreover his mother made him a little robe, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice."

The calling of Samuel.—It is not strange that this beautiful story has been a fruitful subject for artist and poet, and that the child's words, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth," have furnished the text for many a sermon. All should be familiar with Joshua Reynolds' painting, "The Infancy of Samuel." "And the child Samuel grew on, and increased in favor both with Jehovah, and also with men." (What passage descriptive of the boy Jesus parallels this?)

When next we hear of Samuel he is the leader of his people, the aged Eli having died a tragic death after a disastrous battle with the Philistines at Aphek, in which his sons are killed. There are two different accounts of Samuel's position and work on behalf of his people, and they offer even more difficulties than do most parallel narratives. Both agree, however, that he was chiefly instrumental in choosing the first king of Israel, Saul, and also David, the second king.

The Philistine victory and the loss of the ark.—In Lesson XIV it was stated that the Philistines were a strong and warlike people who settled the rich maritime plain from Joppa southward, known to us as Philistia, while the Hebrews were beginning to get a foothold in Canaan. Samson, it will be recalled, was the hero of some of the early skirmishes with them.

THE GROWING POWER OF THE PHILISTINES

The Philistine menace increased and finally threatened the total subjugation of central Palestine. The struggle lasted for nearly a century, until the time of David.

It is a mistake to think of the Philistines as rude barbarians. They were not only superior to the Hebrews in all arts of civilization but they were well organized for purposes of offense and defense. Their five walled cities,[1] each with its independent king,

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE PHILISTINE PLAIN AT LYDDA

united against any common foe, while the Hebrews were ill organized, with little mutual loyalty and no common leader. We must remember, however, that union among the people of the plains was much easier than among those of the hill-country.

It was the Philistine menace that forced the Hebrews to unite under a common leader. Though all

[1] Ashdod, Ekron, Ashkelon, Gaza, and Gath.

the nations about them had kings, these freedom-loving sons of the desert had never been willing to submit to the yoke of a monarchy. Now they were forced to do so.

In the battle of Aphek, between the Hebrews and the Philistines, the latter were not only completely victorious, but they captured the "ark of the covenant

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

A SYCAMORE TREE OF THE PHILISTINE PLAIN

of Jehovah," which the Hebrews in desperation had brought from the sanctuary at Shiloh. It is evident that from very early times the ark had been carried in front of Israel's army into battle, in accordance with the customs of the nations about them. The presence of the ark seemed to them a sure pledge of victory, for it meant that Jehovah was in their midst and fighting for them. To lose the ark to their enemies was the most terrible calamity that could have be-

fallen them, for it meant that the gods of the Philistines were more powerful than their god, or else that Jehovah had forgotten them. In either case the effect would naturally be to diminish their religious faith and zeal.

The Philistines, however, had reason to regret their possession of the sacred object. They bore it rejoicing to the temple of their god, Dagon, where it performed certain miracles, proving the supremacy of Jehovah over Dagon. Soon a terrible pestilence broke out among the Philistines, and they made haste to return the dangerous trophy.

The destruction of Shiloh.—Shiloh was evidently destroyed at this time, for it is not mentioned again; and Jeremiah refers to its destruction. The ark was taken to Kiriath-jearim, and placed in the house of Abinadab, where it remained until a generation later. David bore it triumphantly to his new capital.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The first book of Samuel.

Hannah's vow, 1. 9–11.
Hannah's Song, 2. 1–10.
The child Samuel in the sanctuary, 2. 18–26.
The calling of Samuel, 3. 1–21.
The Philistine victory at Aphek, 4. 1–11.
The pestilence and return of the ark, 5. 6—7. 2.

QUESTIONS

1. What seems to be the most important sanctuary of the Hebrews as the book of Samuel opens? Who is in charge of it?
2. Give the story of the calling of Samuel.
3. What were the results of the battle of Aphek?
4. Why was the ark carried into battle? What did its loss mean?
5. Why was organization more difficult for the Hebrews than for the Philistines? Was there also something in the nature of the Hebrews that made cooperation difficult? Where have we already seen this illustrated?
6. Name the five walled cities of the Philistines.

LESSON XVI

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MONARCHY

The Philistine victory at Aphek was quickly followed by other victories. Tribute was exacted from the Hebrew chieftains as the price of peace. Compared with the well-equipped soldiers of the Philistine kings, the Hebrew fighting forces were a motley company, armed with such rude weapons as each man could improvise from the implements of his calling. It was a religious as well as a political crisis, for Jehovah seemed to have abandoned his people. The ark was hidden away in a private house. Where now was the God that had brought them out of Egypt? Were the Philistine gods more powerful than he? Such thoughts as these filled the minds of the Hebrews. Yet, as at every great crisis in the history of this remarkable people, there were those who stood uncompromisingly for Jehovah. To all true patriots the necessity of united action seemed imperative.

Samuel the seer.—The leading figure at this crucial time was Samuel, a seer and priest of Ramah. He must have been a man of rare insight and power, for it was he who, more than any other, solved the problem of coping with the Philistines by the establishment of the monarchy. Just how he did this we cannot determine except by separating the two narratives already referred to and following the older one which is in perfect accord with the probabilities of history.

The meeting between Samuel and Saul.—The story of the meeting of these two men who played so important a part in the life of Israel is an extremely

interesting one and throws light on many ancient Hebrew customs. Saul is introduced to us as a young Benjamite of good family, remarkable for his physical strength and for his handsome appearance. "There was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." His father, Kish, is a well-to-do farmer, in whose house Saul lives.

An errand on which Saul is sent by his father marks a turning-point in his quiet life. He and a servant set forth to find some asses that have strayed away. They are unsuccessful, and are far from home when the servant reminds Saul that they are near the house of Samuel, the seer of Ramah, and advises that he be consulted regarding the lost animals. Saul hesitates because he has no money with him, but the servant has money, and they proceed to find Samuel, who tells them where the lost asses are. From the story we learn that in those times a seer was supposed to have the gift of clairvoyance, and received money for his services.

Saul entertained at the sacrificial feast.—A sacrificial feast is being held by the heads of families in the dining hall connected with the sanctuary, and Samuel is presiding. Guided by divine insight, Samuel sees in Saul the man of the hour. At his invitation, Saul and his servant are guests of honor, and Saul is given the choicest portions of food. It is evident from 1 Sam. 9. 20 that Saul is a well-known person, and that already he is being talked of as a deliverer. The thoughts of the people have turned to him probably because of his kingly stature and bearing and his well-known courage.

Saul anointed king.—After the feast Samuel takes Saul home with him to spend the night, and in the morning tells him that he has been chosen by Jehovah

as leader of Israel. Then he solemnly and secretly anoints him and sends him home to await the issue of events. That the experience made a profound impression upon the young man is indicated by the words, "And it was so, that, when he turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart." Meeting a band of prophets singing and dancing down the road in religious ecstasy, he joins them, to the amazement of his friends. Saul reaches his home at Gibeah and resumes work on the farm, just as if nothing had happened. The approval of the people is necessary before he can be accepted as their king, and this approval must be won by an exhibition of his powers of leadership.

His qualities of leadership tested.—Soon afterward the Ammonites made a raid on Jabesh, a town across the Jordan, in Gilead. Tribute was offered as the price of peace but was rejected. Instead, the chief of the Ammonites declared that he would put out the right eye of every male in the town in seven days. Messengers hastened across the Jordan for help. They came to Gibeah, but not because Saul was there, for they did not know that he had been anointed king. When the people of Gibeah heard the dreadful news they burst out weeping, but they did nothing. When Saul heard of the matter he was plowing. "What aileth the people that they weep?" said he. When told "his anger was kindled greatly," and he proceeded to *do something* about the matter. He killed the yoke of oxen with which he had been plowing, and cut them in pieces, which he sent to all Israel with the threat that all who did not follow him should have the same thing done to their oxen. There was no appeal to the patriotism of the tribes, for at this time they would not have responded to such an appeal; but there was

a great mustering of the tribes, who came out "as one man," and the deliverance of Jabesh was complete.

His indorsement by the people.—Saul had "won his spurs"; he had shown his ability to lead, and he was at once made king. "And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before Jehovah in Gilgal; and there they offered sacrifices of peace-

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE SO-CALLED TOMB OF THE PROPHET SAMUEL AT MIZPAH

offerings before Jehovah; and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." Thus did Israel start out with high hopes on a new era, the period of the kings. The date of Saul's reign is not definitely known but it may have begun about B. C. 1025.

The later account of Samuel's work.—Until we understand that there are two narratives separated in point of time by many hundred years, and written

from entirely different viewpoints, many passages are perplexing. The author of the later account writes for purposes of religious instruction, to interpret to his contemporaries Jehovah's discipline of his people as seen in their history. Realizing that the monarchy had not been wholly a good thing for Israel, he feels sure that Jehovah could not have approved of it. Of course, then, Samuel did not, for he was a man after Jehovah's own heart. The result of this view is that Saul has been given much less credit than he deserves, and his great work for Israel is not sufficiently recognized.

According to the later account, Samuel is a "judge" of Israel, who in his old age appoints his unworthy sons to succeed him. The people are dissatisfied and demand a king. Samuel regards the demand with great disfavor, considering it a rejection of the kingship of Jehovah. While he assists them in securing a king, he does so grudgingly. The method of selection is by lot, and the choice falls on Saul.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The first book of Samuel.

Saul's search for the lost asses, and meeting with Samuel, 9.
The anointing of Saul, 10. 1–8.
Saul and the band of prophets, 10. 9–12.
Saul presented to the people, 10. 17–27.
Saul's deliverance of the men of Jabesh-Gilead, 11. 1–11.
The choice of Saul as king by the people, 11. 12–15.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the crisis in Israel's history that called forth a king?
2. What had been the attitude of the people toward a kingship?
3. Describe Saul's meeting with Samuel.
4. Of what interesting customs have we a glimpse in this lesson?
5. What were Saul's qualifications for the kingship? Describe his appearance.
6. What light is thrown on Saul's character by 11. 12, 13?
7. In this lesson we have our first glimpse of the prophets, who were destined to become such a power in Israel. What did the people mean when they said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"
8. Locate Ramah on the map.

LESSON XVII

JONATHAN'S GREAT VICTORY

WHEN next we meet Saul he is father of a son capable of bearing arms, the well-beloved Jonathan. As crown prince, Jonathan had command of the king's troops

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

GIBEAH OF SAUL

at Geba, a place not far from Gibeah, Saul's home. (The two places have sometimes been confused.) Here was located a Philistine garrison. Jonathan was an intrepid warrior, full of the spirit of daring, yet without the foolhardiness that often accompanies those traits. Without his efficient leadership, Saul's wars

with the Philistines might not have been even as successful as they were. It was he who, at a crucial time, struck the first blow.

The weakness of Saul's army.—Saul has been able to raise an army of only three thousand, but these have all deserted save six hundred. At the approach of the Philistines they have melted away, concealing themselves in caves, thickets, and other places of shelter. Only Saul and Jonathan have swords and shields, yet with their six hundred they are holding their ground at Geba.

The great victory over the Philistines.—Suddenly Jonathan is seized with the idea of outwitting the enemy and defeating them through strategy. As he looks across the deep ravine which separates the camp of the Hebrews from the Philistine garrison on the steep cliff at Michmash he feels that the plan involves some risks, for he keeps it a secret from his father and the army.

He and his trusted armor-bearer climb down one steep cliff and up the other, and suddenly appear among the Philistines. The latter, thinking the two men are the advance guard of the Hebrew army, are thrown into a panic; a number of Hebrews held as slaves in the camp revolt and join their countrymen: the Hebrews in hiding hurry forth, and the panic is increased by an earthquake. Such confusion ensues that it is impossible to distinguish between friend and foe, and the Philistines kill each other. This is one of the most dramatic scenes in Israel's history, and no other of their battles is so fully described.

Saul, looking across the ravine and seeing the tumult, wonders what it is all about. A roll-call reveals the fact that Jonathan and his armor-bearer are miss-

ing. Saul, like David after him, took no important step without consulting Jehovah. The method of doing this is shown very clearly in this narrative. Saul orders the priest to bring the ark. It is probable that the sacred lots, Urim and Thummim, were kept in a pocket of the priest's garment (known as an ephod) and drawn out by him in response to questions. They could, of course, give only two answers, affirmative and negative. The oracle does not respond promptly to Saul's question, and he says to the priest, "Withdraw thy hand." Saul, impatient, suspends the ceremony and starts in pursuit of the fleeing enemy.

Saul's rash vow.—Jonathan's splendid achievement is somewhat marred by a rash act of Saul. In his desire to please Jehovah, Saul had made a vow that anyone who tasted food before evening, until the enemy were completely routed, should be put to death. This kind of a prohibitive vow is known to us to-day as a "taboo," and is common among primitive peoples. The motive of the food prohibition was, by this act of self-denial, to secure the continued assistance of the deity.

The famished and exhausted men were unable to do effective execution upon the foe, and when the taboo was ended by the going down of the sun they fell upon the captured cattle and slew and ate them without observing the religious ordinance demanding that the blood be sacrificed to deity. Saul was highly incensed when he found it out, fearing the anger of Jehovah, so he had an altar made of a great stone for sacrificial purposes.

Saul then proposed a night attack; but he could get no response from the oracle. This could mean but one thing: Jehovah was offended. Some one must

have violated the taboo. So the sacred lot was again resorted to, Saul and Jonathan being on one side and the soldiers on the other. The lot fell on the royal pair, and when the choice was made between Saul and Jonathan, the latter was selected. Jonathan at once confessed that as he came through the wood he ate a little honey that he found on the ground, knowing nothing about his father's vow. The young man appears to fine advantage here in contrast with his father. He is willing to die, since the vow has been made, but he is clear-sighted enough to realize that it ought never to have been made and he is not afraid to say so. Said he: "My father hath troubled[1] the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found?" The people, however, would not allow Jonathan to be put to death, and even the king dared not go contrary to their demand. "And the people said unto Saul, Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? Far from it: as Jehovah liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground. . . . So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not."

This narrative has been treated at some length because of its great historical significance. We are endeavoring to learn the successive steps in the development of Israel's religion because of what that religion eventually became. The story throws much light upon the religious customs and ideas of the time. It is clear that at the time of Saul the Hebrews conceived of Jehovah as capable of accepting human sacrifice.

Saul's wars.—His reign was a constant succession

[1] Literally, "My father hath brought disaster upon the land."

of skirmishes with the Philistines. There were also, according to one writer, wars with the Edomites, Moabites, and other neighboring peoples, which were generally successful. The Hebrews were surrounded on all sides by enemies, and the anxiety caused by constant warfare must have done much to aggravate Saul's mental malady.

The estrangement between Samuel and Saul.—According to later writers, there was friction between these two men that darkened all of the latter part of Saul's life, and the blame for the estrangement is put entirely upon Saul. Owing to the silence of the earlier writers on the subject it is difficult to arrive at the truth. Perhaps it was inevitable that there should be some friction between the two, since one represented secular and the other religious authority, and at this early time there was no clear demarcation of prerogative.

One account says that Saul did not obey Samuel's instructions to put to death every living thing in a city of the Amalekites which had been taken. Such treatment of a captured city was known as a "ban"[1] and was supposed to be especially pleasing to Jehovah. A second account says that when the army was about to start to battle and Samuel was delayed in arriving, Saul himself offered the sacrifice. Samuel indignantly announced that he would put another king in Saul's place. If these stories are true, then Samuel was really king, and not Saul; and our sympathies are with the harassed king, who had to conduct a difficult war without powers commensurate with his responsibilities.

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[1] "The religious element of the "ban" is found in the complete renunciation of any profit from the victory, and this renunciation is an expression of gratitude that the war-God has delivered the enemy, who is also his enemy, into the hands of the conqueror." *Hastings's Bible Dictionary*, p. 81. Kautsch.

The deterioration of Saul.—There seems to be little doubt, however, that Saul was not in complete sympathy with the prophetic party. His slaughter of the priests of Nob (see next lesson) points that way. So far as we know he shows no interest in the ark of Jehovah and does nothing to restore it to its place in the religious life of the Hebrews. And yet it may be that the ark was inaccessible until David's victories weakened the Philistine power. Saul may have attempted to secure it and failed.

Certainly, the later years of Saul's life, according to all the traditions, are full of unhappiness. "The spirit of Jehovah departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubled him." His malady was probably what we should to-day term acute melancholia. He loses spirit and energy, becoming morose, sullen, and moody, with sudden fits of unrestrained anger. These qualities alienate the people from him, and they are all ready to give their devotion to the young David when he appears upon the scene.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The first book of Samuel.

Friction between Samuel and Saul, 13. 8–15.
Jonathan's daring feat, 14. 1–23.
Saul's rash vow, 14. 24–30, 43–45.
The final estrangement between Samuel and Saul, 15. 10–35.

QUESTIONS

1. Where was Saul's home
2. Describe the relative position of the two armies at Geba; the number and equipment of each. (The numbers given for the Philistine army are doubtless exaggerated.)
3. Give an account of Jonathan's daring deed.
4. Describe the method of consulting Jehovah at that time, using 1 Sam. 14. 18–20 as an illustration.
4. Was Saul living up to the best light he had in making a vow that might cost human life? Why did he make such a vow? (Review here the questions regarding human sacrifice in Lesson XIII.)
5. What prevented Jonathan's death?
6. What was the probable cau e of the estrangement between Samuel and Saul?

LESSON XVIII

THE DECLINE OF SAUL AND RISE OF DAVID

THERE are two different accounts of David's introduction to the court of Saul,[1] but both agree that at first he was in high favor with the king and that he soon incurred Saul's enmity because of his popularity with the people.

David as Saul's minstrel.—In the oldest narrative David is summoned to the court because of his reputation as a skillful player on the harp, that he may charm the evil spirit out of Saul. Antiquity ascribed every form of disease and especially all forms of mental illness to the agency of evil spirits. "Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, who is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass *laden* with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armor-bearer. . . . And it came to pass, that when the *evil* spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took the harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him."

What was David's age and appearance when we first meet him? Most of the accounts represent him as a stripling. "Now he was ruddy, and withal of a

[1] The compiler of First Samuel has woven together several different traditions, which fact accounts for certain inconsistencies and discrepancies. For example, after he has been at the court of Saul (16. 22), he is unknown to Saul and Abner (17. 55). He takes the head of Goliath to Jerusalem while that city is still in the hands of the Jebusites (17. 54). According to one of the narratives, David first comes into prominence through the slaying of Goliath (17. 55). In 2 Sam. 21. 19 the slaying of Goliath is attributed to Elhanan.

beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon." Browning, in his remarkable poem, "Saul," which should be read with care at this point, speaks of him as "God's child, with His dew on thy gracious gold hair." Michael Angelo's famous statue of the young David is the best-known representation of him in art.

Saul's growing jealousy.—Few men have ever found themselves in quite so difficult a position as did Saul at this time. Other kings have had rivals, but there has been only one David. No character in history has been described more minutely than David, faults and all, and we feel that we know him just as he was. Nature had dealt very bountifully with him. He had remarkable strength and skill, good looks, and a winsomeness that captivated the hearts of all with whom he came in contact. Moreover, he had intellectual ability, and a certain grace of speech and a tact that later helped to make him a great diplomat.

Saul had won the kingship largely through his feats of strength and courage, but here was a rival who surpassed him in his own field. When, after a victory, the women came out to meet the returning warriors, singing,

"Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands,"

it must have been evident to Saul that he was playing a losing game. His daughter Michal, whom he married to David that she might "be a snare to him," saved David's life in defiance of her father. His son Jonathan was David's most devoted friend. Pathetic and unkingly is the complaint Saul makes as he sits with spear in hand under the tamarisk tree in Ramah,

all his servants standing about him. "All of you have conspired against me, and there is none that discloseth to me when my son maketh a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me."

The gradual growth of Saul's enmity to David is portrayed with unusual power. At first he is afraid of David, then he is "yet more afraid." Next, as David is playing the harp Saul hurls his spear at him, thinking to kill him. Finally he gives orders for David's assassination. But David "behaved himself wisely in all his ways." He too was in a trying position not of his own making. There are few things in literature as dramatic as the story of the decline of Saul and the rise of David.

David and Jonathan.—The love of these two noble youths for each other has become the classic example of self-forgetful, devoted friendship. "And . . . the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." Jonathan was a very prince among men. As eldest son of the king, and his father's probable successor, he saw the crown slipping from his own head to that of David, yet even that did not disturb the deep love he had for his friend. Perhaps David was put to no such test as this, yet his affection was no less deep. It is remarkable that Jonathan could be so true to David and at the same time not wanting in loyalty to his father.

David and the priests of Nob.—When it becomes clear to David that Saul means to kill him he flees toward his home in Judah. Passing Nob, the seat of a famous sanctuary, and being hungry, he obtains the sacred shew-bread by deceiving the priests, telling them he is on an errand for the king. As a result these priests, eighty-five in number, are put to death by Saul.

In the cave of Adullam.—David now begins to live the life of an outlaw, making his headquarters in the cave of Adullam, on the Canaanite border, just beyond Saul's reach. Here his family and clan join him; also "every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented," to the number of four hundred. These men lived a predatory life, compelling support from the farmers.

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE OF ADULLAM

The most interesting episode during this phase of David's life is that in connection with Abigail and her husband Nabal. After Nabal's death David marries Abigail, and adds to himself much property and influence thereby. Fearing for the safety of his parents, he finds shelter for them with the king of Moab.

Saul's life spared by David.—There are two parallel accounts of this incident. The older is that in

1 Sam. 26. 6–22. Saul and his men, full of weariness, are asleep as David and Abishai steal upon them. Saul's spear is stuck in the ground at his head. The defenseless king is in David's power. Few in David's position would have failed to use that power to their own advantage, but his magnanimous spirit refuses to profit by the helplessness of the king. Saul is a consecrated person, to harm whom would be sacrilege; so David refuses to yield to Abishai's plea for his murder. In this David shows himself far above his times. The conversation between Saul and David on this occasion shows that each still loves the other. Saul is touched even to tears by David's generous conduct.

BIBLE SOURCES: The first book of Samuel.

David the minstrel of the king, 16. 14–23.
David and Goliath, 17. 1–11, 32–54.
The friendship between David and Jonathan, 18. 1–5; 19; 20.
Saul's jealousy, 18. 6–30.
David in the cave of Adullam, 22. 1, 2.
Abigail and Nabal, 25.
Saul's life spared by David, 26. 6–26.

QUESTIONS

1. Give the different accounts of the first meeting of Saul and David. Which account is older?
2. What term would probably be applied to Saul's malady to-day? What was the cause of his mental trouble? Was it partly, at least, his own fault?
3. Show the difficulty in which both Saul and David found themselves with reference to each other.
4. Is there any evidence that David tried to undermine Saul's influence?
5. Describe the young David in appearance, in ability, and in character.
6. In the friendship between Jonathan and David, which rises to greater heights? Give the main incidents in connection with this friendship.
7. Give a character sketch of "Prince Jonathan."
8. What kind of men did David gather about him in the cave of Adullam?
9. Can David be justified for his deception of the priests of Nob?

LESSON XIX

SAUL'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

David finally became tired of the precarious struggle in the wilderness, and in desperation pursued the only course open to him. "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines." So, with six hundred seasoned warriors, David put himself under the protection of Achish, the king of Gath, and became his vassal.

This was the worst thing that could have happened to Saul, for two reasons: the presence of the redoubtable David emboldened the Philistines to make an attack at Gilboa, and the southern tribes, whose sympathies were with David, refused to rally about Saul in his dire need.

David's double policy.—David now begins to play a difficult rôle. His aim is to convince the Philistines that he is thoroughly loyal to them and has completely broken with his countrymen, while at the same time remaining true to the Hebrews. He wants to keep in touch with his own people, for all his inclinations are toward them; and it is not improbable that already he foresees that some time he will be called to be their ruler. He will not accept the position of captain of Achish's bodyguard, because that would keep him always under the king's eye. So he asks for himself the command of Ziklag, a town and fortress on the southern Philistine border. Here he lives the life of a robber

chief, making forays against the Amalekites and other tribes, carrying off their cattle and putting the people to the sword. He sends much of the booty to Achish, but represents to him that it is the result of *raids made against Judah* and allied tribes! Thus he completely wins the confidence of his chief. "And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant forever."

David lived in a cruel age, and his methods were those of his times. In the villages of the Amalekites and other tribes which he and his six hundred free-booters captured, we are told that he left no one alive.

David dismissed by the Philistine chiefs.—The Philistines were right in thinking this a favorable time to strike a blow at the weakened kingdom of Saul. They rallied their forces and marched to the northern side of the Plain of Esdraelon. The Israelites were encamped by the fountain of Jezreel, near Shunem. David, as a vassal of Achish, was summoned to take part in the battle against his countrymen, and he responded with alacrity. "Therefore thou shalt know what thy servant will do."

We are left in the dark as to the real mind of David. It is interesting to speculate as to what he would have done had the Philistine chiefs not been suspicious of his loyalty and forced Achish to send him back to Ziklag. His diplomatic skill undoubtedly would have found some other way of extricating him from an intolerable situation. No one who has studied the character of David can believe for a moment that he would ever have been found on the battlefield in arms against Saul and Jonathan and his own people. Yet the vigorous protest he made against being sent back, thus strengthening his chief's confidence in him, was in en-

tire keeping with his character. "But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been before thee unto this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

Saul's visit to the medium of Endor.— There is a peculiar pathos in this story. Saul now realizes the gravity of the situation. The Philistines have gathered their hosts for a battle. The great crisis of Saul's life has come, and he longs to know the will of Jehovah, but he cannot ascertain it. "And when Saul inquired of Jehovah, Jehovah answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets." This may mean that since he has not been in sympathy with the prophets, they are unwilling to help him, though the narrator means that Jehovah is displeased with him. So he disguises himself and seeks out a medium at Endor, though he himself ordered all such banished from the kingdom. He asks the medium to call Samuel from the dead, which she ostensibly does, and though Saul does not see nor talk with Samuel, he accepts his message of doom as genuine. The battle is to be lost and Saul and his sons are to perish.

The battle of Gilboa.—The answer of the medium is such as the circumstances warrant, but the effect upon Saul is fatal. He goes forth hopeless to a losing battle. Without enthusiasm or faith in victory, he cannot enkindle courage in his followers, as he has so often in the past. Yet his grim determination to die on the field of battle, fighting for his country, calls forth our admiration. The details of the battle are not given, but the Hebrews are soon put to flight. Three sons of Saul, including Jonathan, are killed loyally fighting beside him, and Saul falls on his own

sword rather than surrender. The next day the bodies of Saul and his sons are found by the enemy and hung in derision on the walls of a nearby village. Saul's head and his armor are taken to one of the Philistine cities as trophies.

The kind deed of the men of Jabesh.—In Lesson XVI we learned that Saul's first deed of prowess after being anointed by Samuel was to rescue the men of Jabesh from a wretched fate. Recalling their debt of gratitude, the men of Jabesh came by night, and rescued the bodies of Saul and his sons. "And they took their bones, and buried them under the tamarisk-tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days."

Saul's service to his country.— It is not easy to form a just estimate of Saul's achievements, because his biographers, for two reasons, seem hardly just to him. The earlier writers exalted the work of David, and that of Saul suffers in comparison more than justice demands. Later writers considered the monarchy an evil and looked with disfavor upon the king under whom it was inaugurated. Saul established among the disorganized tribes of Israel a unity that had never existed before, kept the Philistines at bay even if he did not wholly subdue them, and made possible the brilliant reign of his successor, David.

It was Saul's physical preeminence and bravery that led to his selection as king, and he was the kind of a man the times demanded. It is not likely that the patriotic and wise Samuel made a mistake in selecting him. He must have looked "every inch a king." He was always essentially a warrior, never a statesman, and lacked the ability to cooperate with others for the good of his people. All the years of his kingship, however, were spent in the patriotic service of his country.

If it is true that he was not in sympathy with the prophetic party, that was his great loss and the loss of his country. That party generally sought Israel's highest welfare, and in later times proved a powerful bulwark to the throne as well as furnishing moral and spiritual guidance to kings. That Saul was rash and impulsive we know from the vow that came near costing Jonathan his life; that he was subject to fits of uncontrolled violence is shown by his attack on David's life as recorded in 1 Sam. 18. 11. He was naturally suspicious, jealous, and moody, and instead of controlling these faults he allowed them to dominate him. The mental disease which darkened his later years was doubtless partly cause and partly result.

Not the least of Saul's virtues was his simplicity of life. His court was always his farmhouse at Gibeah. He was no lover of luxury—the usual foe of Oriental monarchs—a foe to which David succumbed all too soon. Thus Saul held back for a time the tide of extravagance that less than one hundred years later caused the disruption of the kingdom.

The dates of Saul's reign are uncertain, perhaps from about B. C. 1025 to 1010.[1]

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The first book of Samuel.

David among the Philistines, 27.
Saul's visit to the medium of Endor, 28.
David's return to Ziklag, 29, 30.
The battle of Gilboa, 31.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you think David was justified in joining his country's enemies?
2. Describe his manner of life at Ziklag. Where is Ziklag? Give an account of the double rôle he played.
3. What remarkable powers did he display during his outlaw life? Was he a born leader?

[1] See "1 and 2 Samuel," *The Century Bible*, p. 31.

4. Describe David's followers at this time.
5. What event prevented him from fighting against his countrymen at Gilboa? What do you think he would have done if this incident had not happened?
6. Describe Saul's visit to the medium of Endor and its results. How did she identify him?
7. What were the results of the battle of Gilboa? The location of Gilboa?
8. What faults of David are revealed in this lesson? Which of them can be accounted for by the age in which he lived?

LESSON XX

DAVID'S REIGN AT HEBRON

David was a great diplomat, but tact and diplomacy alone could never have enabled him to pass unscathed through the trying situations that were constantly arising until he was crowned king of united Israel. That he passed safely through every crisis and finally reached the highest place within the gift of his people is a notable tribute to his honesty of purpose and to his patriotism.

David's elegy on Saul and Jonathan.—David was a man of great magnanimity and of genuine and intense feeling. Forgetting the many and great wrongs done him by the unhappy king, he composed an elegy upon the death of Saul and Jonathan, so sincere, so heartfelt, and so filled with lofty and generous feeling, that it remains to this day the classic among elegies. Even at this great distance of time one can hardly read it without being profoundly moved. Next to the Song of Deborah it is (with the exception of a few fragments) the oldest surviving specimen of early Hebrew poetry. It is gratifying to know that in the judgment of many scholars this noble elegy was in fact composed by David. At first it must have been transmitted orally, then it found a place in a national collection of poetry that bore the title, *The Book of Jashar*, meaning the Book of the Upright. The text of the poem is in many places imperfect.

David crowned at Hebron.—After Saul's death, David, guided by the oracle of Jehovah, returned to

Canaan and settled in Hebron. (Recall that David belonged to the tribe of Judah.) "And they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah." One of David's first diplomatic acts was to send his thanks to the men of Jabesh-Gilead for showing respect to the bodies of Saul and his sons. Inasmuch as this part of the country was especially loyal to the house of Saul, it was important that its friendliness be secured. This is one of several indications that from the beginning David aspired to be king over all Israel. (David later had the bodies of Saul and his sons buried in the sepulcher of Saul's father, Kish.)

Ishbaal's court at Mahanaim.—Saul's weak son, Ishbaal, whose name was changed by later writers to Ishbosheth, was crowned king of the northern tribes immediately after his father's death. Because of fear of the Philistines his court was transferred across the Jordan to Mahanaim, in Gilead. He probably paid tribute to the Philistines as the price of peace. As Ishbaal was a man of no ability, the power behind the throne was Abner, a relative of Saul who had been commander-in-chief of his army, an able and an upright man.

Hostilities between the house of Saul and the house of David were incessant. "And David waxed stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." Finally Abner, evidently tired of Ishbaal's incompetent rule, made overtures to David, agreeing to bring all the northern tribes under his sway if certain conditions were fulfilled. David accepted these conditions but stipulated that Michal, Saul's daughter, the wife of his youth, should be restored to him. Michal

had long been happily married to another man, but that made no difference. A woman was from birth to death the property of father or husband. So Michal was torn from her weeping husband and brought to David. Why did David demand her return? From motives of affection? Subsequent events lead us to think not; probably, rather, because as the son-in-law of Saul his cause would be strengthened with the supporters of Saul's house.

The blood-feud between Joab and Abner.—David's nephew, Joab, who soon became captain of his army and his loyal supporter, was his evil genius from this time to the end of the king's life. Joab was a man of large ability, of stupendous energy and daring, but without heart or conscience. No crime was too dastardly for him to commit if thereby David's cause could be advanced. When Abner became unwittingly involved in a blood-feud with Joab (by killing his brother Asahel in self-defense) it was a foregone conclusion that he (Abner) would be killed. When Joab learned of the pact that had been made between David and Abner the time seemed to him ripe for action. He wanted no rival in David's court. Abner was unsuspectingly lured to that court, and under circumstances most atrocious was murdered by Joab's own hand, with the aid of his brother, Abishai. Yet, as we might have expected, remembering David's marvelous power of carrying the people with him, the king was not suspected of complicity in the murder. This is the more remarkable as the strength of Abner was all that kept Ishbaal's throne from crumbling.

David himself followed Abner's bier, weeping and lamenting with an elegy of which we have this fine fragment:

"Should Abner die as a fool dieth?
Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters:
As a man falleth before the children of iniquity, so didst thou fall."

It is significant, however, that though David condemned the murder and pronounced a solemn curse upon Joab, he did not punish him. He was probably right when he told the people that he lacked the power to do so. David is not yet securely seated upon his throne.

The assassination of Ishbaal.—So far David has succeeded in avoiding any suspicion that he is trying to undermine the house of Saul. One more test comes. Two of Ishbaal's own subjects steal into his palace when the doorkeeper is asleep and murder the king; but when they bring his head to David, expecting a reward, all they get for their trouble is prompt execution. In this summary fashion does David announce that he is not plotting for Saul's throne.

David crowned king of united Israel.—It is evident that only under a united monarchy can the Hebrew tribes successfully cope with the Philistines. David has shown himself on many an occasion to be the ablest man among the Hebrews, the only one who can unite the tribes and successfully lead them against their enemies. So the elders of the northern tribes come to Hebron, and there David is crowned king of all Israel. He is obliged to make a covenant with them, however, the terms of which we do not know. It is probable that the sheikhs tried to make provision for guarding their liberties. They dreaded the very thing which came upon them all too soon, in the reign of David's successor, a monarchical despotism.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The second book of Samuel.
David and Ishbaal rulers of the Hebrew states, 2. 1–9.
Hostilities between the states, 2. 12–3. 1.
Abner's disaffection and death, 3. 1–30.
The assassination of Ishbaal, 4. 1–12.
David crowned king of united Israel, 5. 1–5.

QUESTIONS

1. By what steps did David become king of Judah?
2. Where was his capital? (Locate on map.)
3. What actions of David at this time suggest that he aspires to be king of all Israel?
4. Give a brief account of the reign of Ishbaal, of the blood-feud between Joab and Abner, and of the steps by which David became king of united Israel.
5. Make a thorough study of David's "Lament over Saul and Jonathan" and commit the poem to memory.

The first part of the poem gives expression to the nation's great misfortune, the second to David's own irreparable loss, and it rises to its greatest height in his passionate lament for his "brother" Jonathan. Notice how much the beauty of the poem is enhanced by the refrain, "How are the mighty fallen!" which in verse twenty-five is expanded to "How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!" and which brings the whole to a splendid, solemn close in the couplet,

"How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!"

LESSON XXI

THE ORGANIZATION OF DAVID'S KINGDOM

THE remarkable ability of David is shown by the fact that within a few years he not only brought about a union among the Hebrew tribes that never before had existed, but extended his power from Aram on the north to the border of Egypt on the south, and from the Mediterranean Sea on the west, with the exception of Philistia, to the Arabian desert on the east—a territory about two hundred miles long and between seventy-five and one hundred wide. Never again did so large a territory come under the sway of the Hebrews.

The capture of Jerusalem.—It was a stroke of genius that led David to choose Jerusalem as his capital, and no event of his reign was fraught with greater significance for future generations. The city is not only remarkably well fortified by nature, situated on a height, with deep ravines on three sides and a perennial spring at its base, but, in addition, the new capital had the advantage of not having been closely associated with any one tribe, and of lying between the northern and southern parts of the kingdom. The great antiquity of the city added to its prestige. We know from the El Amarna letters that "Urusalim" was a well-fortified and important city as early as B. C. 1400. The most interesting of all these letters are from the king of Urusalim to the Pharaoh of Egypt, begging for help against attacking enemies. At the beginning of David's reign the city was still in the hands of the

Jebusites, who felt such confidence in its impregnability that they boasted that it could be defended by the lame and the blind. The stratagem of David was able to prevail where force could not. Entrance was gained by climbing up a water conduit cut in the rock, a feat accredited to Joab. According to 1 Chron. 11. 6 it was this deed of prowess that secured for Joab the

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE POOL OF SILOAM—JERUSALEM

position of commander-in-chief of David's forces. David at once took up his residence in Jerusalem and with the aid of Hiram, king of Tyre, built himself a palace.

The ark brought to Jerusalem.—Having made the city his political capital, David's piety led him to install in it the ark of Jehovah, and thus it became the religious capital of his kingdom. Ever since the return

of the ark by the Philistines it had been in the house of Abinadab, in Kiriath-jearim, a Gibeonite town. Accompanied by his entire army of 30,000 men, he went to Kiriath-jearim, secured the ark and placed it on a new cart drawn by oxen. The joyous procession then wended its way toward the city of David, but suddenly the rejoicing was turned to mourning. The

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

ROCK CUTTING—NORTH WALL OF JERUSALEM

oxen slipped on the steep hill, and Uzzah, who was walking beside the cart, putting out his hand to steady it lest it fall, was suddenly killed. So little did the Hebrews at that time understand the character of God that they believed he was angry because Uzzah had presumed to touch the sacred object and had smitten him in punishment. The prophets had not yet

arisen to teach that the acts of God are not arbitrary and capricious.

Afraid to have further dealings with a god in so angry a mood, they left the ark in a nearby dwelling-house, the home of a Philistine soldier. When, after three months, no harm, but increased prosperity had come to the owner of the house, David made a second

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

UPPER BETH HORON—MOUNTAIN PASS FROM COAST TO JERUSALEM

and successful attempt to bring the symbol of Jehovah's presence into Jerusalem. "And David danced before Jehovah with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod."

The ark was set in its place in the tent tnat had been prepared for it, and later became the chief object of holiness in Solomon's temple. David, as a part of the ceremony of inauguration, offered burnt-offerings and

peace-offerings, and distributed of the royal bounty to each person a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a bunch of raisins. Thus was consecrated a spot that was to become the most famous sanctuary in the world. We are glad to know these picturesque details of the establishment of Jehovah worship in Jerusalem, because of what that city has meant in the religious development of mankind. We must not think, however, that David realized the full significance of his act. He had no idea of establishing a single shrine for the whole country.

David's court.—His court was naturally on a more extensive scale than that of Saul at Gibeah. We now first hear of a "chief minister," of a "recorder," and a "scribe." Two priests were among the court officers, Abiathar, who had been with David since his fugitive life in the wilderness, and Zadok, of whom we know little. Some of David's sons were also enrolled as priests. David himself was supreme judge and court of appeal, and decided all the most difficult "cases." Now for the first time we hear of an overseer of task work (forced labor), though it is stated that David did not enslave any of the Israelites, but only Canaanites. There was a council whose members were called "Friends of the King," who ate at the king's table.

His army.—The nucleus of David's army was his bodyguard of six hundred Philistines and Cretans whom he had gathered about him in his outlaw days, a band of trained and seasoned warriors. Their commander was Benaiah, who had to his credit many "mighty deeds," one of which was that he slew "a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow." There was also a picked force, "the thirty chief men," commanded by Abishai, Joab's brother, who had won his spurs by killing three

hundred of the enemy at one time with a spear. The highest order of all was "the three mighty men," whose exploits were still more remarkable. Through these legends we are able to learn something of David's wise plans for stimulating courage and daring.

To the regular army, which was commanded by Joab, might be called any able-bodied man in the kingdom in time of need. David's campaigns of conquest were carried on after harvest time, so that his soldiers could pursue their agricultural life a part of the year.

Wars with the Philistines.—These evidently occupied David's attention during all the early years of his reign over the united kingdom. The Philistines at times invaded central Palestine and the Hebrews were forced to retreat before them. David steadily increased in strength, however, and finally was able to meet them in open battle and to drive them out of his kingdom. With his capture of their chief city, Gath (2 Sam. 8. 1), they ceased to be a menace.

Other foreign wars and conquests.—There were successful campaigns against the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites, the Aramaeans, and others. One regrets to say that, according to the record in Second Samuel, David used the same barbaric methods in dealing with the conquered peoples that were practiced by his contemporaries. The struggle for existence was intense, the habitable land insufficient for those who needed it. Every man's hand was against every other man. We need to be on our guard lest we judge the people of those times by modern standards. Our humane feelings are the result of all the best thought and practice worked out by the Hebrews for a thousand years, and twenty centuries of Christian teaching on

top of that. And yet, is it not true that our methods to-day of dealing with subject races are about as bad as they possibly could be?

David's family.—Polygamy has existed among nearly all primitive peoples, and we should be surprised if we did not find it among the Israelites. As was to be expected of an Oriental monarch, when David's wealth and power increased he enlarged his harem, some of his marriage alliances being for reasons of state. Seven wives are known to us before the removal to Jerusalem, and after that the number is much larger. The disasters of the latter part of David's reign are largely traceable to the influences of the harem. The names of eighteen sons and one daughter are given.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The second book of Samuel.

David's capture of Jerusalem, 5. 6–9.
Transfer of the ark to Jerusalem, 6.
David's officers of state, 8. 15–18; 20. 23–25.
David's army. His foreign wars and conquests, 8. 2–14; 10; 12. 26–31; 23. 8–38.
His family, 5. 13–16.

QUESTIONS

1. When in history do we first hear of Jerusalem?
2. Describe the natural situation of the city and its topography, pointing out the features that made it an ideal capital for the Hebrews.[1] Show also its desirability from its geographical situation.
3. Discuss the importance of David's act in making Jerusalem a religious as well as a political capital.
4. What light do we get on the religious conceptions of the time from the story of the first attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem?
5. What new features were introduced into David's court? Contrast his court with that of Saul.
6. Describe the organization of David's army, and his bodyguard.

[1] See *Hastings's Bible Dictionary*, pp. 437–40.

LESSON XXII

THE SHADOW OF DAVID'S SINS

The latter half of David's reign presents a sad contrast to the splendid early years of that reign. Struggle and adversity had brought out and strengthened all his nobler qualities. He had become a good as well as a great king, remarkable, considering the times, for his moderation, justice, and genuine interest in the welfare of his subjects. In return, they gave him their unbounded affection. "Whatsoever the king did pleased all the people."

But when he reached the height of his fame, and had wealth, prestige, and almost unlimited power, his character began to deteriorate. Few have ever been able to resist the insidious temptations that accompany such power.

David's Sin.—A heinous sin committed by the king was the beginning of a series of crimes in his court and within his own family that unfold before us as relentlessly as the acts of a Greek tragedy. There was no escape for David from the Nemesis that pursued him to the end of his life. To a great extent he lost his hold upon his people, retiring more and more from public life, and his last days were saddened by reason of his sons' conspiracies for his throne. Because he coveted the beautiful Bathsheba, wife of one of his soldiers, Uriah, David was guilty not only of adultery but of murder. By his order Uriah was placed in the front rank in battle in the hope that he would be killed,

as he was. Bathsheba thereupon became one of the wives of David's harem.

Nathan's reproof.—The only remarkable thing about this ugly episode is the undertone of sound morality which it reveals in the Hebrew nation. It was and still is customary for Oriental monarchs to take whom they will for their harems, and the life of one soldier more or less would have been counted a little thing in other nations. But the Hebrews dared to protest and to rebuke even the king. The prophet, Nathan, as the representative of Jehovah, went to David, telling him the parable of the rich man, who, though owning many flocks and herds, took from the poor man his "one little ewe lamb." The story aroused David to great indignation, and he cried, "As Jehovah liveth, the man that hath done this is worthy to die! . . . And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man." Nathan closed his rebuke with the words, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house"—a prophecy that was fulfilled.

It is a great tribute to the independence of the Hebrew people that the historian was honest and fearless enough to paint David just as he was, with no attempt to gloss over his sins. This could scarcely have happened in any other ancient nation.

Did David repent? It can hardly be said that he did if we are to understand by repentance what Jesus Christ meant by it. In response to Nathan's reproof he said, "I have sinned against Jehovah." That was a large admission for a mighty king to make, and does him credit; but he retained Bathsheba in his harem, and from this time to the end of David's life her unfortunate influence dominated court and king. She became the mother of Solomon, who was David's successor on the throne.

Shall we excuse David for his sins? Emphatically, no! It would not even be worth while to ask the question had not the attempt so persistently been made. Later Hebrew writers idealized David for reasons that are discussed in the next lesson. The author of the book of Chronicles, writing about B. C. 300, entirely ignores this ugly episode in David's life, and he and other writers represent him as a model for all future generations. As the Christian Church has until recently known but little of how the Bible was written, this view has been accepted, and many good people have tried to convince themselves that David was indeed a man of whom God wholly approved. It has been claimed that his repentance was so deep as to blot out his sin. We have seen on what slight grounds any such claim can justly be made. David should be condemned not because he fails to come up to the standards of our time, but because in some instances he falls so far below those of his own.

David's sons.—The consequences of David's sins appear in the deeds of his sons, who had their father's faults without his virtues, and who were brought up with little restraint amidst the sordid intrigues of the harem. Because of a great wrong done by his oldest son, Amnon, to his half-sister, Tamar, a wrong left unpunished by the king, Amnon was killed by Absalom, Tamar's own brother. Absalom fled to his mother's old home in another country, remaining there three years. Through a ruse on the part of Joab, David allowed him to return, but would not see him for two years, when a reconciliation took place. For five years, however, Absalom had been nursing his grievances, and he awaited his opportunity for revenge.

Absalom's rebellion.—Absalom is described as a

very handsome man, with a profusion of long, heavy hair. The successive steps by which he tried to steal the hearts of the people are told vividly. He "prepared him a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him." He rose up early in the morning and stood by the city gate, and tried to make himself popular with the people by declaring that if he were "made judge in the land" he would deal more justly with them than did his father.

There was evidently at this time much dissatisfaction with David's reign, or Absalom could not have won so many to his standard. It is a pathetic picture which the historian gives us of the aged king, fleeing for his life from the son he loved so tenderly. David and his followers started for Mahanaim across the Jordan, accompanied by no armed force save the bodyguard of six hundred. And David "had his head covered, and went barefoot: and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up."

The priests, Zadok and Abiathar, would have accompanied David had he not sent them back, thinking they could serve him better in Jerusalem; and he also sent Hushai back to act the part of spy and pretended friend of Absalom. Through the advice of Hushai, Absalom rejected the counsels of his real friend, Ahithophel, and the result was the defeat of his cause. When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was rejected he knew that Absalom's cause was lost, and "he saddled his ass, and arose, and gat him home, unto his city, and set his house in order, and hanged himself."

We have just here an interesting glimpse into the life of the times. As David and his friends were on their way, to Mahanaim they were met by Ziba, "with

a couple of asses saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and a hundred clusters of raisins, and a hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine." When they reached Mahanaim the people brought them "beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and meal, . . . and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of the herd."

The battle and death of Absalom.—David sent

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE TOMB OF ABSALOM—JERUSALEM
(Dating from the Graeco-Roman period.)

forth his forces in three divisions to meet the rebels, who were advancing for attack. As the soldiers marched forth to battle the king stood by the gate and appealed to Joab and the other leaders, "Deal gently with the young man, Absalom." The battle went against Absalom, and in trying to make his escape, riding on a mule, the thick boughs of a great oak caught his head, and he hung suspended and helpless. We know

before we read the next incident in the story who will come and kill him—the relentless Joab—a deed for which David never forgave him. One of the most vivid and most human touches we have of King David is where he sits in the gate, anxiously awaiting news of the battle, but less eager to learn that it has been won than that his unworthy son is safe. When he received the news of Absalom's death, "the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

David's victory, however, came near ending disastrously for him. The people who had so loyally helped him heard how he did nothing but grieve for Absalom. There was a sudden change from the joy of victory to the sorrow that was born in them by David's grief. With a few master-strokes the author gives us a glimpse of the victors slinking away into the city as if cowards who had lost the battle and fled. It took Joab's sternness to recall the king to himself. This had the desired effect and "the king sat in the gate, . . . and all the people came before the king."

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The second book of Samuel.

David's crime and Nathan's reproof, 11; 12. 1–15.
Absalom's rebellion, 14. 25–33; 15; 16; 17.
The battle and death of Absalom, 18. 1–31.
David's grief over Absalom, 18. 31–19. 8.

QUESTIONS

1. Contrast the latter part of David's reign with the early part.
2. What effect did struggle and adversity have upon David's character? What effect did wealth and power have upon him?
3. Do you find in David evidences of heartfelt repentance for his great sin?
4. How do you account for the fact that David's sons turned out so badly?
5. Give the story of Absalom's rebellion and its result.

LESSON XXIII

THE DEATH OF DAVID. HIS CHARACTER AND ACHIEVEMENTS

For some time before the death of David there was plotting and counter-plotting for the throne on the part of his two sons, Adonijah and Solomon, abetted by their supporters. Adonijah was the oldest surviving son, but the kingship was so new that the right of primogeniture had not yet been established. Yet the presumption would naturally be in favor of the oldest son, and Adonijah regarded himself as heir to the throne. He may have reflected the attitude of the people when he said later to Bathsheba, "Thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, and that all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign." Solomon's chief supporters were Nathan, Zadok, Benaiah, and David's bodyguard of six hundred. The leading men on the side of Adonijah were Joab and Abiathar.

David's death and Solomon's accession.—With the kingship in view Adonijah prepared for himself "chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him," as Absalom had done. He made a great feast, to which he invited his chief supporters, intending, doubtless, to proclaim himself king at this time and seize the throne. The news of this feast aroused the friends of Solomon, for whom the succession was won through the duplicity of Bathsheba and Nathan, who conspired together to make David believe that Adonijah had already proclaimed himself king. David at once ordered Zadok to anoint Solomon. "And they

blew the trumpet; and all the people said, *Long* live king Solomon."

The account of David's death follows. The last glimpse we have of him is as a feeble old man, a victim of the intrigues of his court. Far more enviable was the close of Saul's life on the field of battle. If the account we have is trustworthy, David's deathbed instructions to Solomon were to put to death Joab, and Shimei who had shown himself hostile to David at the time of Absalom's rebellion. This does not seem like the magnanimous David. It is believed that his reign extended from approximately B. C. 1010 to 970.

The importance of David's reign.—Its importance not only to Israel but to the world can hardly be overestimated. Up to the time of his accession there had been grave danger that the little nation would be swallowed up by the surrounding heathendom. David freed his people from the menace of the Philistines and all their other enemies. He unified his kingdom, established a national capital, greatly extended his dominions, and gave his country a place of influence and power among other nations. Now the Hebrews were to have an opportunity to develop those ideals with which they were destined to enrich the world. The founding of a religious capital was the single act of David that was to count most in the development of the Hebrew religion.

The character of David.—No character in history has been so extravagantly praised as David, and perhaps no other has been so misunderstood. As the contrast between David and Saul was almost wholly to the advantage of the former, so the contrast between David and his successor, Solomon, was even more to

David's advantage. Later generations did not forget that it was the tyranny of Solomon that caused the disruption of the young and promising kingdom. After the disruption neither kingdom was able to contend alone against the powerful nations about them, and in the end disaster overwhelmed both. Henceforth, without political independence, under the rule of cruel foreign nations, the Hebrews looked back upon the reign of David as the single thoroughly successful era in their history—the Golden Age of their race. The Old Testament writings in which David is most highly exalted were written at a time when the Hebrews were a people with a splendid past and the hope of a glorious future, but no present. As their most precious memory of the past was David's reign, so their dearest hope for the future was another earthly kingdom, with another David on the throne. In their longing for this better time they idealized David more and more, until he typified for them all that was best in their race and seemed to them to have been "a man after God's own heart."

He was skilled in speech, pleasing and convincing. No one knew better how to charm and attract people. That he was a great poet we know from the elegy on the death of Saul and Jonathan, and according to Amos (6. 5) he was an inventor of musical instruments. The superscriptions in the Psalter which ascribe certain psalms to him are the work of later compilers and editors, and it is doubtful if any of them *in their present form* can be ascribed to him. There is no reason, however, to doubt his claim to be called "the sweet psalmist of Israel."

David had a remarkable power of winning affection. When he expressed a wish for a drink of water from

the spring at Bethlehem, his boyhood home, three of his "mighty men" made their way through the Philistine lines and got it for him (2 Sam. 23. 15, 16). His refusal to drink it because it had been bought with the "jeopardy of their lives" reveals a trait of character not often found in monarchs, ancient or modern. When he refused to take food after the death of Abner, the people came about him and tried to make him eat (2 Sam. 3. 35). They would not let him fight in the battle against Absalom, "for you are worth ten thousand of us" (2 Sam. 18. 3). That he was able to win the love of the noble Jonathan remains, perhaps, the brightest jewel in his crown. David was intense in his affections, and capable of great loyalty to those he loved, and he knew how to be generous to a foe. He sought out Jonathan's son and gave him all his father's property, with a seat at the royal table for the rest of his life, and he spared the life of the sleeping Saul. His weak and vacillating attitude toward his sons merits our condemnation, but even here "his failings leaned to virtue's side," for he tenderly loved them.

He was a great statesman as well as warrior. The rapid growth of his kingdom in security, prosperity, and happiness was due largely to his own plans, wisely conceived and vigorously executed. We cannot fail to be impressed with his power of doing everything in the superlative degree.

David's religious conceptions.—He earnestly desired to serve Jehovah and never entered upon any important undertaking without endeavoring to learn the divine will, through the sacred oracle. He worshiped Jehovah by means of sacrifice, of course, as no more spiritual form of worship existed at that day.

Like all his contemporaries, he believed that each deity had his own domain, beyond which his influence did not extend. When forced to flee from the hand of Saul his bitterest complaint was that he was driven out from the presence of Jehovah (1 Sam. 26. 19).

Still cruder conceptions of God are shown in the stories of the taking of the census (2 Sam. 24) and the hanging of Saul's sons. The main facts in the latter

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE TOMB OF DAVID—JERUSALEM

story are these: A famine had stricken the land, which meant, of course, that Jehovah was angry. When the reason was sought the reply of the oracle was that the country was being punished because of Saul's cruel treatment of the Gibeonites. In response to the demand of the Gibeonites, David at once handed over to them two sons and five grandsons of Saul, to be

hanged. (In this connection read Tennyson's powerful poem, "Rizpah.") David's idea of God was of a being who could be pleased with the murder of these innocent men!

His connection with the temple.—David wanted to "build Jehovah a house" but was told by the prophet Nathan that Jehovah willed that this should be done by his son. In 2 Sam. 24. 21–25 we read of David's

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE MOSQUE OF OMAR—JERUSALEM

effort to avert a pestilence from Jerusalem (believed to have been sent because he had taken a census of the people) by building an altar to Jehovah upon the threshing-floor of Araunah. When Araunah objects to taking payment for the threshing-floor, David gives utterance to this noble thought: "Nay; but I will verily buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer

burnt-offerings unto Jehovah my God which cost me nothing." There is a general agreement among scholars that the site of David's altar was identical with that of Solomon's altar of burnt-offering, and that the site is now occupied by the Dome of the Rock, sometimes called the Mosque of Omar.

BIBLICAL SOURCES:

The famine and the hanging of Saul's sons, 2 Sam. 21. 1–10.
The purchase of Araunah's threshing-floor and erection of an altar to Jehovah, 2 Sam. 24.
The accession of Solomon, 1 Kings 1.
The death of David, 1 Kings 2. 1–11.

QUESTIONS

1. Give the most important facts concerning each of the following persons: Nathan, Abiathar, Benaiah, Adonijah, Joab.
2. In David's deathbed instructions what prominent leaders are marked for death?
3. Give approximate dates of David's reign.
4. Locate on map the boundaries of David's kingdom.
5. Make a thorough character study of David, verifying all the statements you make concerning him by incidents from his life, or by the opinion of him held by his contemporaries (not by later ages).
6. What do you consider the chief elements of greatness in David's character?

LESSON XXIV

SOLOMON'S AUTOCRATIC RULE

PERHAPS no king ever began his reign with a more promising outlook for the future than did Solomon. David's brilliant reign had subdued all Israel's enemies and Solomon found himself in peaceful possession of a large territory. The records indicate that at first he genuinely desired to be a good ruler of his people, but the temptations of wealth and unlimited power proved too much for him. Though our information about him is scant and more or less self-contradictory, his reign has come down to us in history as the synonym for extravagance and for despotism. As a result of it the kingdom broke in two immediately upon his death.

Solomon's treatment of his rivals.—It was customary for Oriental monarchs, on coming to the throne, to put to death all who might dispute their title to it. Solomon at first showed unusual clemency. Adonijah, who was promised safety on the condition of good behavior, brought death upon himself by asking that he might have for his wife a beautiful Shunammite who had attended David in his last days. In accordance with Oriental ideas, Solomon regarded this as a step toward the seizure of the throne. The aged Joab, realizing that he too was marked for execution, fled to the altar of Jehovah, and was there cut down by Benaiah, at Solomon's order, with as little mercy as he himself had shown his numerous victims. The life of Abiathar was spared because of the service he had rendered David, but he was banished to his native

town of Anathoth. Shimei was told not to leave Jerusalem, upon pain of death. When he left the city three years later he was promptly executed. Thus Solomon's last dangerous enemy was removed.

Solomon's dream at Gibeon.—Soon after his accession he made a visit to Gibeon for the purpose of worshiping Jehovah. "For that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar." Here Jehovah appeared to him in a dream and told him to ask for anything he wanted. Solomon asked not for riches or honor, but for an understanding heart, that he might rule his people aright. Jehovah was so much pleased that he promised him not only wisdom but riches and honor.

Solomon as judge.—One of the reasons Absalom was able to steal the hearts of the people from David was that the latter had become lax in "judging" the people. Solomon, at the beginning of his reign, distinguished himself for the wisdom with which he administered justice. The classic instance, showing not only his sense of justice but also his insight and cleverness, is the case of two women, both claiming to be the mother of the same child. When Solomon ordered a sword to be brought, that the child might be divided between the claimants, the real mother revealed herself by promptly yielding her claim to the other.

The organization of Solomon's kingdom.—He added many new officials to his court, which was out of all proportion to the size of his kingdom. The chief aim of his life, evidently, was to equal or surpass in splendor the most magnificent potentates of his day. His dominant characteristic was love of display and luxury. "Solomon's provision for one day" is given as three hundred and thirty bushels of

flour, six hundred and sixty bushels of meal, thirty oxen, and one hundred sheep, besides "harts, and gazelles, and roebucks, and fatted fowl." It is easy to see that to furnish such a quantity of provisions would prove an intolerable burden to his kingdom, in which most of the people were poor. To secure the means for his enormous expenditures now became his greatest problem.

His method of taxation.—Soon after the beginning of his reign the territory left him by David began to decrease in area. Edom and Moab successfully revolted. Damascus broke away from Solomon's control and as the chief city of Aram eventually became one of Israel's most dangerous enemies. The loss of territory meant a decrease in revenue, and Solomon resorted to new expedients to raise the needed funds. He divided the country into twelve districts, ignoring tribal boundaries, and compelled each to furnish support for his expensive court one month each year. (Judah, his own tribe, is not mentioned, and was probably exempt.) This aroused in the people a smoldering resentment which was ready to break forth at the first opportunity. Solomon could not manage even with this enormous revenue. He borrowed large sums of money from Hiram of Tyre, which he had great difficulty in repaying. As a result he ceded to Hiram twenty cities in Galilee.

Commerce under Solomon.—The Hebrews had never been a seafaring people, for they had no seaport on the Mediterranean. Solomon, with the assistance of Hiram, king of Tyre, built "a navy of ships" in the Gulf of Akabah on the Red Sea and established trading routes to distant points in Arabia and possibly India. His ships were gone three years and brought

back "gold, and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks." Sandalwood and precious stones, hangings and carpets are also mentioned as articles of import. In addition to his trading ships, Solomon established caravan routes to distant points. He imported large numbers of horses from Egypt and sold them to neighboring nations at a handsome profit. His commercial enterprises brought much wealth into his country, but it does not seem that they were intended to benefit his people so much as to add to the luxuries of his court.

His relations with foreign nations.—He was a man of peace, having no desire for foreign conquests, and for this we must commend him. He built fortresses at strategic points for the better protection of his country, and fortified Jerusalem. He brought Palestine into direct contact with other nations through commerce, and sought to maintain friendly relations with his neighbors through alliances, especially through marriage alliances.

Solomon's wives.—He took wives from among the Ammonites, Edomites, Hittites, and other nations, generally for reasons of state. The book of Kings says that "he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines," which is thought to be an exaggeration. The marriage which brought most glory to him in his own eyes and in the eyes of his subjects was that with an Egyptian princess. It was a proud day when a scion of the race that had been in bondage to the haughty Egyptians led home the daughter of the reigning Pharaoh as his queen. Each of his wives was allowed to establish her own worship at his court, and to have her priests and other dependents. This, however, was regarded merely as "international courtesy." His foreign wives "turned

away his heart" from Jehovah, according to the book of Kings. It does not appear, however, that Solomon ever ceased to worship Jehovah, and he lived at a time when Jehovah worship was not exclusive, as it became later. Yet the worship of these other gods was attended with immoral practices, so that Solomon was a demoralizing influence in his kingdom.

Solomon's reputation for wisdom.—Later generations idealized their famous king both in regard to his magnificence and his wisdom. "So king Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. And all the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart." The visit of the Queen of Sheba is doubtless meant to show that his fame had penetrated to remote countries, though there is no reason to doubt that she is a real person and that the visit actually took place. Sheba is thought to have been in southwestern Arabia, whence the queen journeyed with "a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones." Her chief purpose in coming was "to prove him with hard questions." The magnificence of his court made even more impression upon her than his wisdom, so that "there was no more spirit in her"; and she said, "Behold, the half was not told me."

The nature of Solomon's wisdom is suggested in 1 Kings 4. 33: "And he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of birds, and of creeping things, and of fishes." This would be called to-day natural science. Whatever may have been the nature of Solomon's wisdom, it was not the kind to make him a wise ruler. Instead of

being the wisest of all kings he was in many respects foolish, for his despotism came near crushing out the free, democratic spirit of his people, and he largely undid the beneficent work of David.

His reputed writings.—"He spake three thousand proverbs; and his songs were a thousand and five." So said a later writer. Practically all the sayings of the Hebrew sages finally came to be attributed to him. Tradition has made him the author of the book of Proverbs, the book of Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. Modern scholarship has made it clear that he was not the sole author of any of the three. He did write proverbs and it is very probable that many such are now found in the book of Proverbs. It seems likely that he encouraged literature, and his peaceful reign was favorable to its production.

His reputation for magnificence.—The accounts in which his wealth and luxury are most emphasized were written at a time when the nation was impoverished, and when the Hebrews loved to think of the material splendor that had once made their kingdom famous—a not unnatural pride. The traditions which are reflected in the following passage must have had a substantial basis in fact. "And all king Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold: none were of silver. . . . And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones."

Biblical Sources: The first book of Kings.

Solomon's treatment of his rivals, 2. 19–46.
Solomon as a judge, 3.
His provision for revenue, 4. 7–28.
His reputation in other lands, 4. 29–34; 10. 23–25.
The visit of the Queen of Sheba, 10. 1–13.
Solomon's wives, 3. 1; 11. 1–8.

SOLOMON'S AUTOCRATIC RULE

Questions

1. Had there been anything about the training of Solomon to fit him to be a wise king?
2. How did he treat his rivals to the throne?
3. Was he different in this respect from other monarchs of his day?
4. Describe his method of raising revenue for the support of his court.
5. Discuss the commercial enterprises of Solomon.
6. What were his chief ambitions and what steps did he take to realize them?
7. What qualities attributed to Solomon does the story of the Queen of Sheba illustrate?
8. What was the probable nature of Solomon's wisdom? What did it lack?

LESSON XXV

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE

FAR more important to posterity than Solomon's wealth or his wisdom was his building of the temple. Later generations did not approve of him as a ruler, but they never forgot that they owed to him their splendid temple, which had much to do with the development of their religion. Solomon did not regard the temple as even the chief of the group of buildings he erected. Yet, through it the religion of Jehovah came to have a prestige never known before, and a habitation about which the affections could cling. With the advantage of the royal favor and the royal bounty, it naturally became the chief shrine of the country and steadily increased in influence. Hundreds of years later, when it had been destroyed, and the Hebrews had become a scattered and persecuted race, it was the memory of their holy temple and their hope of rebuilding it that kept alive within them their national hopes and prevented them from being absorbed by their conquerors.

Solomon's building enterprises.—The temple was only one of a group of buildings erected by Solomon on a hill later called Mount Moriah, a little to the north of David's Jerusalem, and inclosed within a wall, forming an almost impregnable citadel. The construction of the temple took seven years, while the building of the royal palace consumed thirteen years. Five buildings are mentioned as belonging to the king's palace. The House of the forest of Lebanon, the largest

of the group and the first in order as one approached from the city, poetically named because its forty-five pillars of cedar trees suggested a forest, was an audience hall for state occasions, as well as an armory. Next in order stood the Hall of Pillars, the use of which we do not know. In the Hall of Judgment, arrayed in all his glory and seated on a throne of ivory and gold, Solomon dispensed justice to the people. There was a special palace for the Egyptian princess, and another that served as a royal residence.

As Palestine had neither the workmen nor most of the materials for such a vast undertaking, these were furnished by Hiram of Tyre, who has already been referred to, and Solomon was to pay him with agricultural products. The wood used in the construction was from the cedars of Lebanon, long famous for their beautiful color and their odor. The stone was quarried from a hill near Jerusalem. In order to carry on his work of building Solomon used "task work," that is, compulsory, unpaid labor. David had used forced labor to some extent, but had employed in it only the conquered Canaanites. Solomon made slaves of thousands of Israelites as well as of Canaanites, thus treating his own people as they had been treated by their hated Egyptian taskmasters more than two hundred years before. Nothing that Solomon ever did so aroused the indignation of the people. Thirty thousand Israelites were sent in relays to Lebanon for the cutting of timber. In addition there were eighty thousand quarriers and seventy thousand burden-bearers. The trees were taken to the nearest seaport and floated to the port nearest to Jerusalem, probably Joppa, thence dragged over the rough, steep road to Jerusalem.

Description of the temple.—No one knows just how

it looked, for no pictured representations of it have come down to us. In attempting to reconstruct it in imagination, we rely on the description in the book of Kings, and also upon "the temple[1] of Ezekiel's vision." The temple was built of cedars of Lebanon and white limestone, which was almost like white marble. In shape it was rectangular, about one hundred feet[2] in length, thirty-five in width, and fifty in height, inside measurements. It was divided into three parts, the porch, the outer room, or Holy Place, and the inner room, or Oracle, called the Holy of holies. These three rooms had flat roofs of different levels. Entrance to the temple was by means of the porch, through a great double door, on either side of which stood a hollow bronze pillar, about thirty-two feet high. The large outer room contained nothing but a table with the shew-bread and the golden candlesticks. By far the most important part of the temple was the Oracle, a mysterious chamber, cubical in shape, thirty-five feet each way, with no windows and no doors except the one leading from the outer room, over which a thick veil always hung. Other nations of antiquity always had in their temples images of their gods. It is a remarkable fact that the temple contained no image of Jehovah, an indication of a spiritual conception of Deity surprising in that rude age.

There was nothing in the Holy of holies except the ark and the two cherubim, one on each side of it, gigantic, semimythological figures, which guarded it

[1] Ezekiel was a priest who was carried to Babylonia at the time of the exile. The temple had been destroyed, and Ezekiel's description does not purport to represent it just as it was. He gives, rather, his own idea of what the rebuilt temple should be. Yet, as he was perfectly familiar with Solomon's temple, his description is of value in the imaginary reconstruction of the building. See Ezekiel 40–43.

[2] We do not know the exact dimensions of the temple because the length of a cubit is not certain. The estimates vary from 16 to 25.2 inches. The dimensions given here are based upon a cubit between 20 and 21 inches in length.

with outstretched wings reaching from wall to wall. This awesome room was the dwelling place of Jehovah. Thus did the Hebrew people receive the training which finally gave them the conception of God as a Spirit.

The walls of the temple were probably ten feet thick at the base (judging from Ezekiel), but narrowing toward the top. All around the building on the outside, except in front, were three tiers of small chambers, one above another, and entered only from the outside. These were used for priest's vestments and implements of sacrifice and for the storage of treasures. Above the chambers and protected by the overhanging roof were windows. The inner walls of the temple were lined with cedar and the floor was of cypress wood.

In front of the temple was the court, in which stood the great altar, cut out of the native rock; and the molten sea, an immense basin-shaped tank, holding sixteen thousand gallons of water, for use in purification. This basin rested on twelve brazen oxen, three facing each of the points of the compass. The water came by a conduit cut in the rock from a spring beneath. This conduit is still to be seen.

Though Solomon's temple was a splendid building in the eyes of his subjects whose ancestors had so short a time ago been desert wanderers, it was small and insignificant in comparison with some of the temples in existence at the time. (Compare it with the Egyptian temple of Karnak, for example.) The Phœnicians, Babylonians, Egyptians, and other nations had magnificent temples. It was not because of the richness of their temple that the religion of the Hebrews outstripped all other religions, but because of the *character attributed by them to their God, Jehovah.* This had everything to do with shaping their own character.

Upon the completion of the temple the ark was formally transferred to it, and it was dedicated with great pomp. Solomon's fine hymn of dedication probably dates back to that impressive occasion, but the noble and beautiful prayer seems more in harmony with the ideals of a later day.

The significance of the temple for later times.—It was not Solomon's intention to build a temple which should be the central place of Hebrew worship. He intended it, rather, as a royal chapel, where he and his imposing court could worship in a manner in keeping with their dignity. In the light of history, however, we see that no other event of Solomon's reign or of the reigns of his two predecessors equaled in importance the building of the temple. The remarkable religious development of the race during the next four hundred years could not have taken place without the temple.

Not Sinai but Jerusalem was now thought of as the special dwelling place of Jehovah. The temple and priesthood became the strongest support of the Davidic dynasty and continued so until the city and temple were destroyed in the sixth century B. C. This blending of religion and patriotism added stability to the nation. In later times the temple (or its successor, the second temple) came to be loved with a passionate devotion that no other house of worship has ever inspired.

Solomon's legacy.—Solomon was a strong man, and it would not be fair to say that his reign brought no good to his kingdom, though it probably would be just to say that it brought more evil than good. Cornill[1] says of him, "Solomon was what one might almost call a cosmopolitan nature: he extended immensely the intellectual horizon of Israel, and opened his country

[1] *History of the People of Israel*, p. 94.

in all directions to intercourse with the world.... Not only gold and ivory, sandalwood and peacocks came to Jerusalem, but also the art of the Phœnicians and Egyptians, the wisdom and the fairy lore of the East found their way into Israel, giving everywhere the most powerful impulses, and rousing to new life."

Nevertheless, he planted in the hearts of his people the seeds of discontent and is responsible for the breaking apart of the kingdom after his death. A rebellion occurred in the latter part of his reign, led by Jeroboam, a man of unusual ability whom Solomon had placed in charge of the forced labor (in Jerusalem) of his tribe, Ephraim. Jeroboam's revolt was instigated by the prophet, Ahijah, which probably indicates that the religious element of the kingdom was in sympathy with his attempt. The revolt failed, however, and Jeroboam fled to Egypt and remained there until Solomon's death, which occurred about B. C. 932.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The first book of Kings.

Solomon's building enterprises, 5.
The construction of the temple, 6; 7.
Solomon's hymn of dedication, 8. 12, 13.
His prayer of dedication (in part), 8. 22–30.
His address to the people, 8. 54–61.
Jeroboam's revolt, 11.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss very briefly Solomon's building enterprises.
2. Who was Hiram and how did he assist Solomon?
3. Locate Hiram's city on the map.
4. Discuss the origin and purpose of Solomon's temple, its site, shape and dimensions, the material of which made, and the process of construction.
5. What was the most sacred part of the temple?
6. What objects were in the Oracle?
7. Speak of the significance of the temple in the religious history of the world.
8. Contrast Solomon's reign with that of Saul in social conditions, wealth, relations with other nations, etc. By about how many years are the two reigns removed from each other?

NOTE.—For charts and plans of the temple as reconstructed by Stade, see *Hastings's Bible Dictionary*, p. 898ff.

LESSON XXVI

THE DIVISION OF THE KINGDOM

Solomon's heir was his son, Rehoboam, whose mother was an Ammonitess. He is remembered chiefly for his insulting treatment of the northern tribes at his accession, treatment which resulted in the revolt of the best part of the nation and the establishment of a rival kingdom in the north. The prince ascended the throne at Jerusalem without opposition, but it was quite otherwise in the north. Seldom has there been a more dramatic contest between the rights of the people and the tyranny of despots than the struggle that ensued between Rehoboam and the northern tribes. The monarchy was a comparatively new thing among the Israelites—less than a century old—and they had no foolish notions about the "divine rights of kings." According to their view, there was mutual obligation between king and people. The right of hereditary succession was not yet fully established, and the people until the accession of Solomon had had some voice in deciding who should govern them.

There had never been any real coherence between the northern and southern tribes. A chain of Canaanite cities had separated them even as late as the time of David. The strong rivalry between the north and the south had manifested itself time and time again. It is in keeping with the independent spirit of the northern tribes that they insisted that Rehoboam should come to their chief city, Shechem, to be crowned.

The contest between king and northern tribes.

—In words so vivid that we seem to be eyewitnesses of the stirring events the author of First Kings tells the story. A deputation waits upon Rehoboam at Shechem, promising the allegiance of the tribes if the oppressive yoke of Solomon (the crushing taxation and the forced labor) can be made lighter. Rehoboam asks three days to consider the matter. First he seeks the advice of the older men who served his father, and they counsel moderation. That advice does not suit him and he follows the counsel of the young men who have grown up with him, who advise him, "Thus shalt thou speak unto them, My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. And now whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." The high-spirited northerners are incensed at this outrageous answer, and at once renounce allegiance to the house of David, taking up the cry, "What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David." (The reference to tents is merely a reminiscence of nomadic days.) When the king sent an official to quell the riot they stoned him to death, and Rehoboam had to flee for his life. "And king Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem."

What an opportunity was lost by the young king to undo some of the many wrongs that had been done by his father to his subjects, and to lay a solid foundation for a united Israel! The people had declared they were ready to give loyalty for fair treatment. Rehoboam's choice was fraught with heavy consequences. To himself it meant the immediate loss of the largest and in many respects the best part of his kingdom,

and the revenue that went with it. It meant a heritage of civil war between these two peoples of the same blood, when the closest union was needed to enable them to resist the aggression of their powerful and unscrupulous neighbors. Thus it led to the certain downfall of both, and eventually brought about the exile and the political ruin of the Hebrew nation.

We are not to feel, however, that this was an unmixed evil. If there is any period of the history of the nation in which we can recognize divine guidance more than in another, perhaps it is here. The other nations of antiquity rose, flourished, and decayed, some of them to go down into oblivion because they contributed so little to the progress of mankind. So might the Hebrews have done, but they were working out a destiny far greater than they knew. They were oppressed and afflicted. They suffered as no other race has ever suffered, and out of their tribulation and the deep, spiritual experiences that resulted, came the religion which has been the most precious revelation of God to the world.

The reign of Jeroboam I.—As soon as the death of Solomon was announced the leaders of the northern tribes sent for Jeroboam, who was their strongest man, and who had been in exile in Egypt since his unsuccessful rebellion. He was now chosen king of the northern kingdom, which is henceforth called Israel, and reigned on the whole wisely and well for twenty-two years. According to tradition, Israel comprised ten tribes, or eleven if the Joseph tribes are counted as two. "Twelve was the ideal fixed number of the tribes which expressed the unity of the nation. The enumeration varied according as Ephraim and Manasseh were reckoned as one tribe (Joseph) or two;

in the latter case the landless tribe of Levi was excluded from the number. The old document assigns ten tribes to Jeroboam and therefore (apparently) leaves to Solomon's son the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. In 11. 36 only one tribe is left to the house of David, and this view is shown to be historical according to 12. 20."[1]

The sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan.—Jeroboam made Shechem his capital and fortified it, as he did other parts of the country. Knowing that if his people continued to worship at Jerusalem all the fruits of the revolution would be lost, he sought to increase the prestige of the sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan and to make them rival the temple at Jerusalem. To this end he made two molten calves of gold and placed one in each sanctuary. He also established a priesthood and feast days. For doing these things he is condemned by later writers and by the prophetic bands of his own day.

We must be careful in reading in the book of Kings the account of Jeroboam's reign and also of the reigns of all the subsequent kings of Israel, to understand the point of view from which they are written. The author is a Judæan, writing after the fall of the northern kingdom, and after Jerusalem has come to be considered the only legitimate sanctuary. From his point of view the rebellion of the northern tribes is apostasy from the true religion. As for the golden calves Professor Peritz fitly describes their purpose and tendency:[2] "Jeroboam meant them to represent Jehovah rather than Canaanite divinities. Even so, their Canaanite character tended to make Baalism popular, and they

[1] Skinner, "I and II Kings," p. 188, *New Century Bible.*

[2] *Old Testament History*, p. 165.

violated the imageless principle of Jehovah worship embodied in the second commandment." And also, may we not add, in Solomon's temple?

Contrast between the northern and southern kingdoms.—There were great natural differences between the two, which are reflected in their subsequent history. Israel was three times as large as Judah,

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE HATHOR COW

In Egypt the cow, sacred to Hathor, is worshiped. Jeroboam while in Egypt may have received impressions which resulted in placing the "calves of gold" in the sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan.

with more than twice the population. The land of Israel was fertile, and that led to prosperity, and that to the luxury that brought about deterioration and final destruction. Judah was hilly and barren. The people had to struggle for a living, and that tended to keep them hardy and simple in their way of life; thus Judah endured much longer than Israel. Israel was

in close contact with the outside world through near neighbors and great travel routes. The northern tribes thus tended to lose their peculiar characteristics, while it was otherwise with Judah. Israel was open to attack on all sides; Judah was much better protected by its natural situation, and other nations did not covet its barren soil. The greatest assets of Judah were the holy city, the temple, and the Davidic dynasty.

The conflict between the two kingdoms.—One of the first acts of Rehoboam was to raise a large army for the invasion of Israel, but through the influence of a prophet the undertaking was given up. For the first hundred years, however, there was constant hostility between the two states, each at times calling in the assistance of foreign nations against the other. Thus they not only had to face their alien enemies but their strength was dissipated by war with each other, and by internal strife. They never ceased to dream of a great political future, yet they did everything possible to prevent its consummation.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The first book of Kings.

The rejection of Rehoboam by the northern tribes, 12. 1–19.
Jeroboam chosen king of the northern kingdom, 12. 20.
The sanctuaries at Bethel and Dan and the golden calves, 12. 25–33.

QUESTIONS

1. Enumerate the causes that led to the division of the Hebrew kingdom. Why did it not occur during Solomon's reign?
2. Point out the fatal weakness of Rehoboam's policy.
3. Were the people of the northern kingdom right in their demands?
4. What were the immediate effects of the division of the kingdom? The ultimate effects?
5. Point out the most important geographic differences between the northern and the southern kingdoms and show how these differences influenced their history.
6. Locate Bethel and Dan. What was Jeroboam's motive in increasing the prestige of these sanctuaries?
7. For what do later writers criticize him most severely? are their criticisms just?

LESSON XXVII

THE HOUSE OF OMRI

THERE was no such loyalty to their rulers on the part of the people of the northern kingdom as was felt by the subjects of the southern kingdom for the Davidic dynasty. As a result there were constant usurpations of the throne, usually by military leaders, with the assassination of the reigning king. Most of these kings are only names to us, having left no mark upon history. During the first twenty-five years after the death of Jeroboam there were four weak kings, and the kingdom constantly lost ground. Damascus began encroaching on Israel's territory, and the country was weakened by civil wars.

The reign of Omri.—In 887, after the usurper, Zimri, had killed the king in a drunken brawl and had himself perished after reigning one week, the army proclaimed their commander-in-chief, Omri, as king. Omri, after a struggle of four years against a rival, became the founder of the most important dynasty of Israel. During his reign Assyria first came in contact with Israel, and he is the first Hebrew king mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions. Indeed, he was known to the Assyrians as the founder of the kingdom of Israel, and in their annals written thirty years after his death that kingdom is referred to "as the house of Omri." On the famous Moabite stone,[1] Mesha,

[1] The Moabite stone was erected by Mesha to commemorate the successful revolt of Moab against Israel. It is a slab 3½ by 2 feet and was found in 1868 in the ruins of ancient Dibon. It is now in the Louvre.

who was king of Moab during Ahab's reign, says, "Omri was king of Israel, and he afflicted Moab many days because Chemosh was angry with his land." (Chemosh was the god of Moab.) Moab remained under the dominion of Israel forty years.

The founding of Samaria.—Omri has been called the David of the northern kingdom. One of the chief events of his reign was the building of a new capital for Israel. He began his reign at Tirzah, which seems to have been given up because of the difficulty of fortifying it. Omri chose a hill northwest of Shechem, rising precipitously on three sides from a wide and fertile valley. On the top of the hill he built Samaria. That he chose well is shown by the fact that one hundred and fifty years later it took the Assyrian army three years to reduce the city to subjection.

Ahab's marriage to Jezebel.—Very disastrous to Israel's future was the alliance made between Omri and Ethbaal, king of Tyre, and cemented by the marriage of Omri's son Ahab to Ethbaal's daughter, Jezebel. The need felt for this alliance on the part of Omri arose from the menace of Damascus and Assyria. According to a statement in 1 Kings 20. 34, Omri was obliged to yield certain cities to Damascus and to grant certain trading rights to the Aramæans. Assyria was growing constantly more powerful and her armies were gradually moving down toward Palestine.

In spite of the importance of Omri's reign, it is dismissed by the author of the book of Kings with only a few verses. He closes with the condemnation pronounced upon practically all the kings of Israel. "And Omri did that which was evil in the sight of Jehovah. . . . For he walked in all the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sins wherewith he made

Israel to sin."[1] The following formula also is found at the close of the description of his reign, showing that a more complete history of the period was known to the people for whom the book was written: "Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he showed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?" The account of the reign of each of Israel's kings closes in practically this same way.

The reign of Ahab.—Omri's son, Ahab, succeeded him in 876. The chief event of his reign was the titanic contest with the Phœnician Baalism. It was Ahab's ambition to build up a magnificent court, like that of Solomon, and he went about it in much the same way that Solomon had done, by making marriage alliances with the surrounding nations. His foreign princesses were allowed to establish the worship of their gods at his court, in accordance with the custom of the times. The practice was regarded merely as a courtesy extended to a friendly nation, somewhat similar to the courtesies shown by modern nations to the ambassadors of other countries. The great progress in religious sentiment is seen in the fact that there were prophets in Ahab's time who condemned him, while we hear of none who criticized Solomon for the same things. Ahab himself does not seem to have deserted Jehovah for Baal, and the fact that the names of three of his children[2] each contain a syllable from the name "Jehovah," is evidence that Ahab considered himself loyal to Jehovah.

It was the marriage of Ahab with the infamous

[1] The reason for the condemnation of all the kings of Israel is stated in Lesson XXXIX, in a discussion of the book of Deuteronomy.

[2] The names of Ahab's children: Ahaziah, "Jehovah is strong"; Jehoram, "Jehovah is exalted"; Athaliah, "Jehovah is great."

Jezebel that precipitated the contest. Her father had been a priest of Baal, and had murdered the king and seized the throne. Jezebel was a remarkable woman, absolutely without conscience and of indomitable will and boundless energy. She was not satisfied to have her religion merely one of those represented at court; it must be the leading one. She gradually increased the number of Baal prophets until four hundred and fifty ate at her table, and the splendors of Baal worship far overshadowed the worship of Jehovah. Now, indeed, the religion of Jehovah was menaced as it never had been before.

What Phœnician Baalism meant.—The worship of foreign deities by the Israelites was not a new thing. When they came into Canaan they found the land full of shrines "on every high hill and under every green tree." They believed that these local Canaanite gods controlled all the blessings pertaining to field and vineyard, hence to ignore them might mean failure of crops and other disasters. The common name of all these gods was Baal, meaning "Lord." It was but slowly that the Hebrews as a whole came to a belief in one God. While they worshiped Jehovah as their tribal god, and considered him above all other gods, they yet believed in the reality of others. Chemosh was the god of Moab, Milcom the god of Ammon, etc.

The result had been a confusion in the minds of the people, and they sometimes even called their own god the Hebrew Baal. In naming their children they frequently used compounds containing the name "Baal," just as they did compounds containing "Jah" for Jehovah. Both Saul and Jonathan did this (Ishbaal, Meribaal), though they were true Jehovah worshipers.

The introduction of Baal and Ashtart, the Phœnician

gods, was recognized as a dangerous innovation. Their worship was accompanied by licentious and obscene practices which were abhorrent to the best moral sense of the Hebrews, and it raised anew the whole issue between the religion of Jehovah and other religions in Israel. These immoral practices had crept in to some extent from the Canaanite rites, but their danger had been much less insidious. Jezebel's form of worship now obtained in Israel all the prestige that her high position and commanding ability could secure for it. There was also a political danger. Phœnicia was a powerful rival of Israel. If the Israelites should become worshipers of the Phœnician gods, the next step might easily be their political dependence upon Phœnicia.

At this juncture a mighty champion of the religion of Jehovah appeared upon the scene in the form of Elijah the prophet.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The first book of Kings.
The reign of Omri, 16. 8–28.
Ahab's accession and marriage to Jezebel, 16. 29–33.

QUESTIONS

1. Where and by whom was the city of Samaria founded? Locate on map and describe its site.
2. In what ways was Omri's reign important?
3. In what respects did Ahab resemble Solomon?
4. Discuss Jezebel's influence upon the religion of Jehovah.
5. Show how natural it was that the Hebrews should at first worship the local gods of Canaan.
6. Why was the Phœnician Baalism more dangerous to the Hebrews than the Canaanite Baalism?
7. Give marks of definite religious progress since the time of Solomon.

LESSON XXVIII

THE PROPHET ELIJAH

"The weirdest figure among the prophets of Israel," he has been called. Some of the most striking and fascinating stories in the Bible cluster about this heroic, solitary, and mysterious personage. These narratives as they stand are strong testimony to the impression produced on the minds of the people by this great prophet.

Elijah is a man of Gilead, a true son of the desert, and a representative of the nomadic stage of civilization. His garb is a hairy mantle with leathern girdle about his loins, his food such as he can provide for himself away from the haunts of men. Strong of body and fleet of foot, he glides like the wind from place to place. (One of the most interesting glimpses we have of him is that in which he runs before Ahab's chariot from Carmel to Jezreel, a distance of more than thirty miles.)

The contest on Mount Carmel.—The first time we hear of Elijah he appears suddenly before Ahab and announces that Jehovah is about to send a drought, lasting some years. We learn from what follows that this is to be a punishment for the apostasy of the Israelites. The drought lasts three years and the people are in great distress. The intensity of the calamity is made more vivid by the suffering of Elijah himself at the brook Cherith, where he is fed by ravens.

At the end of three years Elijah, according to tradition, reappears and demands an assemblage of all

Israel on Mount Carmel for a contest between himself and the four hundred fifty prophets of Baal. Ahab accedes to the demand, the assembly gathers, and the contest is won by Elijah.

The flight of Elijah.—The victory, however, is not yet won. Jezebel threatens Elijah's life, and he flees to Beersheba, plunging alone into the wilderness, leaving

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

MOUNT CARMEL

the haunts of man to be alone with his God. Now a great reaction comes, and this daring, heroic man is so discouraged that he sits down under a juniper tree and asks Jehovah to let him die. An angel brings him food, and, strengthened by it, he goes to Mount Horeb (Sinai), where he has a message of encouragement from Jehovah. He is led to see that the preservation of the religion of Jehovah does not depend on him alone. Things are not so bad as he thought, for there

are in Israel seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal. Nowhere does Elijah seem quite so human as in this episode. Many people have found comfort in the thought that even the strongest and most heroic have their moments of discouragement, and also in the realization that the progress of God's work in the world does not depend upon any one person.

The story of Naboth's vineyard.—The most marked instance we are told of Jezebel's pernicious influence over Ahab was in the case of Naboth's vineyard. Ahab, in extending the palace grounds, wished to secure for a vegetable garden the vineyard of a certain Naboth, who refused to sell it. Ahab did not accept the refusal with a very good grace, but the fact that he did accept it as final shows that even kings could not do anything they pleased in Israel. "And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him. . . . And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread." Jezebel came in and finding out the cause of Ahab's ill humor, said, "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? arise, and eat bread, and let thy heart be merry." She promised to get the vineyard for him. Jezebel believed in the divine right of kings! Two base fellows were bribed to swear that they heard Naboth curse Jehovah and the king, and the elders of the city pronounced him guilty. He was taken out of the city and stoned to death.

This deliberate murder of a citizen revealed to the people Ahab's true character and his real attitude toward his subjects. If an innocent man could be falsely condemned by public officials and put to death, no one's life was safe. There must have been intense

indignation throughout Israel over this high-handed deed. Such things could be done with impunity by some Oriental monarchs, but never by the rulers of the Hebrews.

Always there were able leaders representing an undertone of strong, wholesome morality among the people, who dared at the risk of their own lives to rebuke tyrannical acts. Nothing more clearly shows the moral fiber of the Hebrews as compared with other nations. In this crisis one man stands out above all others—Elijah, the prophet. He went straight to Ahab, whom he found in Naboth's vineyard, and rebuked him. Ahab, like David under Nathan's rebuke, expressed repentance. "He rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly." But he made no attempt, so far as we know, to make reparation for his heinous crime.

The translation of Elijah.—The end of his life was in keeping with all the rest of it—majestic and full of the dramatic. Later admiring generations were unwilling to believe that he had died as others die. Tradition said that, accompanied by Elisha, whom he had chosen under Jehovah's guidance as his disciple and successor, he passed across the Jordan, the waters miraculously parting when struck by his mantle, when suddenly a chariot of fire was seen, and he was carried up in it by a whirlwind to heaven. "And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof! And he saw him no more."

There were two tasks before the Hebrew prophets, to drive Baalism out of Palestine, and to lift the religion of Israel into ethical purity. Elijah's work was

almost entirely directed to the first of these, though the story of Naboth's vineyard shows that to him morality and social justice were the foundation of all religion. The second of these tasks had to wait for the prophets of the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries, for whom the courageous work of Elijah paved the way.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The first book of Kings.
Elijah's warning to Ahab, 17. 1.
The contest on Mount Carmel, 18. 16–46.
The story of Naboth's vineyard, 21.
Other Elijah stories, 17, 18, 19, 21.

QUESTIONS

1. Give a description of Elijah, his personal appearance, dress, manner of life, etc.
2. Where and under what circumstances does he first appear?
3. By what was the religion of Jehovah endangered?
4. On what grounds did the Hebrew prophets condemn Phœnician Baalism?
5. Were the Hebrews monotheists at this time?
6. What was the issue in the contest on Mount Carmel? Locate Mount Carmel on the map.
7. Give the story of Naboth's vineyard. What great principle was at stake?
8. What is the reason for Elijah's place among the greatest heroes of the Old Testament?
9. What qualities of Elijah are most needed to-day?

LESSON XXIX

THE DECLINE OF THE HOUSE OF OMRI

Ahab reigned from B. C. 876 to 855. In spite of the unfavorable impression we get of him because of his attitude toward Baalism, he appears to have been a ruler who endeavored, not without success, to advance his kingdom in independence and in prosperity. His alliances with Phœnicia and other neighboring states were probably entered into through fear of the growing menace of Assyria. The most important foreign wars of Ahab's time were those with Aram, which lasted during most of his reign, and in the prosecution of which he lost his life.

The wars with Aram.—Omri had been forced to grant certain concessions to Aram, and Ahab continued these for some time, but the Aramæans gradually grew bolder. When their king, Benhadad, besieged Samaria and made of Ahab the demand, "Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine," Ahab granted him all he asked. When, however, the Aramæan monarch demanded that his soldiers be allowed to plunder Samaria, Ahab refused the monstrous proposition. Benhadad replied with a boastful threat, in response to which Ahab sent him this memorable message: "Let not him that girdeth on *his armor* boast himself as he that putteth it off."

In a skirmish that followed, and in a battle fought at Aphek, the Aramæans met with utter defeat, and Benhadad was taken prisoner. He was released only on his promise to surrender all territory that had be-

longed to Israel. The next we know, Ahab and Benhadad are fighting side by side, in alliance with a number of kings of small states, against Assyria, at Karkar (in Aram). It is doubtful which side won the battle, though Assyria claimed it. Benhadad failed to keep his pledge to Ahab and the alliance between them came to an end.

The death of Ahab.—A year after the battle of Karkar, Ahab, assisted by the king of Judah, fought a disastrous battle for the recovery of Ramoth-Gilead from the Aramæans. The story of the preparations for this battle, of the predictions of the four hundred false prophets, and that of Micaiah, the one true prophet, is intensely interesting. The impression Ahab had made upon Benhadad is reflected in the command of the latter to his soldiers, "Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the king of Israel." Though Ahab disguised himself before entering the battle, he was fatally wounded by a chance arrow. Though realizing that his wound was mortal, the intrepid warrior was propped up in his chariot until evening, that his men might not lose their courage. "And there went a cry throughout the host about the going down of the sun, saying, Every man to his city, and every man to his country. So the king died, and was brought to Samaria; and they buried the king in Samaria."

Ahab was succeeded by his son Ahaziah, who, as was to be expected in a son of Jezebel, was friendly to Baal worship. A continuation of Aramæan wars resulted unfavorably to Israel. Ahaziah's brother, Jehoram, was the last of the dynasty of Omri, and under him the city of Ramoth-Gilead was restored to Israel.

The work of Elisha.—There was at this time a

strong and growing party of religious enthusiasts led by the prophets, who were determined upon the extinction of Baalism, root and branch. These enthusiasts belonged to guilds called "sons of the prophets," who lived together in communities. Such schools of prophets had grown up around the ancient sanctuaries, such as Bethel, Dan, and Gilgal. Perhaps their most important work was the educational campaign they persistently carried on, but they were hotbeds of revolution, and uncompromisingly against the corruption, intemperance, and luxury of the Canaanite civilization. They desired that Israel should go back to the religion of Jehovah as it was before the contamination of the Canaanitish influence. We first hear of these guilds in the time of Samuel (1 Sam. 10. 10–12). In the century and more since his time they had greatly increased in influence. Of course they were entirely out of sympathy with the house of Ahab.

Elisha in his time was the moving spirit behind these guilds and in close touch with them. The glimpse we have of them gives us an impression of a simple, kindly brotherhood. The traditions of Elisha are filled with miraculous deeds, yet almost all point toward a character of great kindliness, unselfishness, and uprightness. Very different from Elijah, he is a more companionable and friendly man, yet he lacks Elijah's originality and tremendous strength. Much of the material concerning both Elijah and Elisha is of the nature of popular stories such as gather about great national heroes. Illustrating Elisha's kindly spirit are many stories. For example, he sweetens a spring of brackish water, he renders harmless a dish of poisonous pottage; he multiplies a poor widow's cruse of oil, and when a workman is grieving because he has dropped

a borrowed ax into a pool, Elisha causes it miraculously to rise to the surface! His generous treatment of the Aramæan troops sent to capture him, in which he returns good for evil, is surprising in that age of the world! (2 Kings 6. 14–23). In the story of the healing of the rich leper, Naaman, the entire absence of any mercenary spirit in Elisha furnishes an example especially needed to-day. One of the most refreshing pictures in the Bible is that of the home in Shunem where Elisha was so often a guest (2 Kings 4. 8–37).

Jehu's usurpation of the throne.—Ahab's son, Jehoram, was on the throne at the time of the bloodiest revolution that ever occurred in Israel. Jehu's revolution was instigated by the prophetic party, though they could not have foreseen all the consequences. Jehu was probably selected to supplant the reigning king because he was a man of great force (commander of the king's army) and an ardent hater of Baalism.

It was King Jehoram's temporary disability that gave the prophetic party their opportunity. He was at Jezreel, being healed of the wounds he had received in fighting the Syrians, while Jehu was in charge of the army in the siege of Ramoth-Gilead. Suddenly one of the sons of the prophets appeared before Jehu, commissioned by Elisha to anoint him king of Israel. This was done in secret, but when the officers of the army learned of it they immediately proclaimed Jehu king. Their act shows three things: the large influence of the prophetic party, even in affairs of state; the lack of loyalty felt in general toward the reigning king; and a confidence in Jehu which surprises us in the light of subsequent events.

His bloody slaughters and their result.—Then occurred the fastest ride mentioned in ancient

history. To "drive like Jehu" has become a synonym for furious driving. Jehu, with a few followers, set out in mad haste for Jezreel, thirty miles away, with the purpose of taking the king unaware and therefore defenseless. In this they were successful, and not only killed Jehoram but his nephew Ahaziah, the king of Judah, who was visiting Jehoram. In his frenzied zeal for exterminating the house of Ahab, Jehu caused practically all its princes to be put to death, as well as a number of princes of Judah who happened to be in Samaria at the time.

The wicked Jezebel met with a death that was a fitting close to the life she had led. Realizing the fate that was about to overtake her, "she painted her eyes, and attired her head, and looked out at the window." As her enemy appeared she greeted him with a taunt. By Jehu's order she was thrown out of the window to the pavement below. Miserably she died, and there was no one to take her part or to protect her body after death. All the priests and Baal worshipers throughout Israel were lured into a Baal temple in Samaria by Jehu on the pretext of *his zeal for Baal worship*, and then slaughtered. Thus Phœnician Baalism was rooted out of Israel and with it the dynasty that had fostered it. Jehu's revolution occurred in 843.

Jehu was animated partly by fanatical religious zeal and partly, no doubt, by personal ambition. His contemporaries were so blinded by hatred of Baalism that they were incapable of judging the moral quality of his acts. A later prophet of Israel condemned his bloody deeds and predicted that Israel would yet pay the penalty for them (Hos. 1. 4). Though Jehu's descendants ruled Israel to the fourth generation, the country continually grew weaker. Hazael of Da-

mascus soon took from Israel the territory east of the Jordan. The Assyrian king threatened and Israel was too weak to defend herself, so many of her leading men having been slain, and Jehu bought him off by a heavy tribute. Jehu was the first of many of Israel's kings to pay tribute to Assyria. In an Assyrian monument now in the British museum he is represented

JEHU OF ISRAEL DOING HOMAGE TO SHALMANESER

in the unkingly attitude of kissing the foot of the Assyrian monarch.

The killing of Ahaziah brought disaster upon Judah by allowing the throne to be seized by his mother, Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. The murder of Benhadad of Damascus by Hazael (which had been instigated by Israel's prophetic party in the belief that it would somehow aid in getting rid of the house of

Ahab) recoiled upon Israel. Hazael proved one of the cruelest and most relentless enemies that Israel ever had.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: First and Second Kings.

The beginning of the Syrian wars, 1 Kings 20.
The battle of Ramoth-Gilead, 1 Kings 22. 29–40.
Elisha and his miraculous works, 2 Kings 2, 4, 5.
The anointing of Jehu, 2 Kings 9. 1–7.
Jehu's bloody reform measures, 2 Kings 9. 11–37.

QUESTIONS

1. What were the causes of the wars with Aram?
2. How and where did Ahab meet his death?
3. What can be said for and against him as a king of Israel?
4. Discuss the character and work of Elisha.
5. Give the story of the healing of Naaman and of the visits to the Shunammite woman.
6. Contrast Elisha with Elijah; which was greater?
7. What was the cause of Jehu's revolution?
8. Can anything be said in defense of Jehu's methods? What were some of the evil results of his slaughters?
9. Locate Ramoth-Gilead; Jezreel; Shunem.

LESSON XXX

THE HEBREW PROPHETS

"The whole history of humanity has produced nothing which can be compared in the remotest degree to the prophecy of Israel. Through prophecy Israel became the prophet of mankind. Let this never be overlooked or forgotten: The costliest and noblest treasure that man possesses he owes to Israel and to Israelitic prophecy."[1] If it be true, as many of the most intelligent people in the world believe, that the Hebrew prophets were the greatest force for good that the world ever knew until the time of the appearance of Christianity, then everyone ought to have some familiarity with them and their teachings.

In studying the prophets the first thing to do is to get rid of the idea that the primary office of the prophets is to foretell the future. While they did foretell future events, their predictions almost always had to do with the inevitable results of right and wrong action. Their great mission was to speak forth the will of God, to denounce wrong, to chide the people for their sins, and to point out the right way. They were patriotic and fearless, daring to rebuke even kings. They lived as they spoke, and were ready to suffer martyrdom for their country and their religion. One of the best definitions of a prophet is that by Canon Driver: "An inspired interpreter of Jehovah's action in a great crisis of history." Some one has called them "impetuous cataracts of righteousness."

[1] Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 178.

Perhaps we are not in need of their spiritual guidance as were those who lived before the advent of Jesus Christ, for we have his teachings, yet it is our own fault if we do not find in them help and inspiration for to-day. The evils against which the prophets struggled were strikingly like those of our own time—oppression of the poor, love of luxury, bribery, graft, illegal accumulation of wealth, and various other forms of corruption and immorality. In the example of the prophets we may find encouragement to be true to our convictions, even though we should have to stand against the whole world.

The great service rendered by the prophets.—For three hundred years, from the eighth century to the fifth, they were the teachers and inspirers of the Hebrew race, leading them up to a higher and ever higher conception of God and of morality. Most of them were not appreciated while they lived, but later, after the race had suffered persecution and exile, they were revered and their words were treasured. So they continued to lead and inspire the Israelites hundreds of years after their death. Other races of antiquity were absorbed by their conquerors. That the Hebrews were not was due to their religion, and their religion was due in large measure to the prophets. Most important of all, it was the Hebrew religion that made Christianity possible.

The origin of prophecy.—All nations have had soothsayers, diviners, oracles, prophets. Shall we seek the cause of this in something that is innate in man? It would seem so. There is in primitive man a deep-seated belief in the existence of supernatural beings who control the destinies of men, and a passionate desire to know their will. To go contrary to

that will invites disaster; to be in harmony with it makes for success and prosperity. Furthermore, there has been an almost universal belief that the divine will could be ascertained if the proper means were used. All can sacrifice to the gods, but not all can interpret their will. So the Greeks and Romans had their oracles. Recall that they would never go to battle unless the "omens" were favorable (see Browning's "Pheidippides"). The Babylonians read the will of the gods in the changing aspect of the stars. Among the Hebrew race, as among all other early races, there were many augurs, soothsayers, and diviners. It is here that we find the origin of Hebrew prophecy.

Is there anyone who does not like to believe that in its beginnings the religion of Israel did not differ greatly from the religions of the surrounding nations? Rather should we count this the highest tribute to the Hebrew race. As has already been shown, that race had a marvelous power of absorbing the best in the civilization of the surrounding nations. These nations all had their prophets, but none of them produced anything in the remotest degree resembling Hebrew prophecy at its best.

Anyone who would understand the Old Testament must study the prophets first of all, for prophecy was the dominating factor in Israel's history from the time when the documents of that book began to take form to the establishment of Judaism. At every great crisis in the history of the race these prophets stood at the turning of the ways trying to direct the nation into the right path. They were always generations in advance of the rank and file of the people, and led the vanguard of progress. They unified the nation and developed within it resisting power through com-

mon loyalty to the religion of Jehovah, so that later the bitter persecutions of their enemies could not destroy them as a race. Moreover, the larger part of the Old Testament, if we omit the poetry and Wisdom literature, was written by prophets.

The first Hebrew prophets.—It is in the time of Saul that we first find prophets as a class mentioned in the Old Testament. The prophets of that day "moved about the country devoting themselves to a rather extravagant type of religious life. They carried musical instruments with them, and by means of music and song seem to have worked themselves up into a state of frenzy."[1] It will be recalled that after Samuel had secretly anointed Saul he said to him: "It shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city, that thou shalt meet a band of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp, before them; and they will be prophesying: and the Spirit of Jehovah will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them." It was as Samuel had said, and Saul astonished his neighbors by joining the band of prophets and "prophesying" (1 Sam. 10. 10–13). These prophets were narrow and fanatical but patriotic, and the people stood in awe of them because of the supernatural power which it was believed they possessed. They were very zealous in behalf of Jehovah, and from the beginning they were always a party of protest against the evils of their day.

There were among the Hebrews, from very early times, communities of prophets which were partly training schools for religious purposes. The members wore a garb distinctive of their order, ate at a

[1] *Beacon Lights of Prophecy*, Knudson, p. 2.

common table (with their wives and children), and were supported partly by agriculture and partly by charity. Whether or not these communities originated with Samuel we do not know, but he exercised a commanding influence over them. Samuel himself is usually referred to as a *seer*, and the explanation is given that in those days a prophet was known as a seer.

The development of prophecy.—As we follow the prophets for the next two hundred years we find them increasing both in influence with the masses and in prestige in national affairs. They rebuke David, they warn Rehoboam, and incite Jeroboam to revolt. As in the case of Elijah, they take up the cause of the oppressed against the king himself. In the time of Elisha their power has become so great that they can make and unmake dynasties. In Samuel's time they do no more than vaguely protest against the existing order of things; in Elisha's time they have a definite program —the extermination of Baalism.

The early prophets were characterized by extreme eccentricity. To some extent this remained true to the end; but there is a vast difference between the prophets of Saul's time and an Isaiah. There was one thing, however, that was common to them all. Every one of Israel's true prophets regarded himself as the *mouthpiece of Jehovah.*

It was only about one hundred years from the time of Elisha to that of Amos, with whom begins a new era, that of the writing prophets. Up to this time none of the prophets committed their ideas to writing, so far as we know. Amos ushers in the Golden Age of prophecy, which reaches its climax in Isaiah and Jeremiah.

In the English Bible there are sixteen so-called

prophetical books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, known as the "major prophets"; and twelve "minor prophets"—Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The book of Daniel, however, is not a prophetic book, as will be shown in a later lesson, nor is the book of Jonah. Many other parts of the Old Testament were written by prophets, as will be explained.

SOURCES: Cornill's *The Prophets of Israel*, "The Meaning of Prophecy" pp. 1–15.

QUESTIONS

1. What is a prophet in the Hebrew sense?
2. What was the mission of the prophets? What can you say of their importance? During what period of time did they flourish?
3. Give a description of the earliest prophets we know of among the Hebrews. In what period did they appear?
4. Trace the progress of prophecy from the earliest prophets to Amos. What was common to them all?
5. How do you account for the appearance of false prophets (as in the time of Ahab)? Is it an attempt to commercialize prophecy?

NOTE.—While in this book an entire chapter is given to each of the most important prophets, space forbids more than the bare mention of some of the less important. The teacher may think it best to omit them entirely, therefore few questions upon them have been given.

LESSON XXXI

AMOS, THE PROPHET OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS

Amos was the first of the Writing Prophets, a term used to designate those prophets for whom we have writings that purport to be their utterance, in distinction from those who left no written record, such as Elijah and Elisha. In the words of Cornill, Amos is "one of the most marvelous and incomprehensible figures in the history of the human mind, the pioneer of a process of evolution from which a new epoch of humanity dates."[1]

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

A JUDÆAN SHEPHERD

The conditions that called Amos forth.—These conditions were, in brief (1) the corruption of the northern kingdom, and (2) the Assyrian menace.

Though Amos was a native of Judah, his work was

[1] *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 46.

done in Israel. In order to get the setting for the remarkable, almost phenomenal appearance of this man at Bethel, with his startling message, we must know something of the conditions that called him forth.

From the writings of Amos and Hosea we have a vivid idea of the evils of the times. A great social transformation had been taking place. In the years

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE RUINS OF TEKOA

that followed the fall of the house of Omri, Israel's fortunes were at low ebb. About 785, however, there came to the throne an able king, Jeroboam II, whose reign of forty years was the most brilliant as well as the longest in the history of the northern kingdom. His success was partly due to the crippling of Damascus and the neighboring states by Assyria. The tribute exacted from subjugated states in addition to the

wealth from commerce brought a prosperity never before known in Israel. Many deserted the agricultural for a mercantile life. There was a rush to the cities, especially on the part of the wealthier classes.

This accession of wealth bred a love of pleasure and luxury that brought about moral decay. Society, as always under such circumstances, was like a pyramid,

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

BETHEL

with the few who had power and privilege above, and the toiling, suffering masses below. Taxation was oppressive, justice in the law courts was perverted, the poor were in bondage to the rich.

The book of Amos gives us a flashlight picture of the times. We learn that the rich had palaces furnished with ivory, and houses of hewn stone; that they had winter homes and summer homes; that they lay on couches of ivory, on damask cushions and listened

to musical instruments; that they drank costly wines and anointed themselves with precious oils. They oppressed the poor, even taking their clothes for debt; and bribery and immorality were rife. How far Israel has traveled since the old days of the simple, austere, desert life!

Nothing was further from the thoughts of the leaders in Israel than that the country would soon be destroyed, yet out on the horizon they ought to have been able to discern the Assyrian menace, as did Amos, and they should have been straining every nerve to meet the danger.

Appearance of Amos at Bethel.—Amos was a herdsman and a dresser of sycamore trees. His home was in Tekoa, ten miles south of Jerusalem. Perhaps he had heard of the corruption of the northern kingdom through the travelers who passed by, or at the markets where he sold his wool. At any rate, he was led by the Spirit of Jehovah to go up to Bethel at the time of a great festival, and to deliver to the assembled people a message of terrible denunciation for their sins.

Bethel was to the northern kingdom what Jerusalem was to the southern, the seat of the chief sanctuary. From all over Israel the people had come to attend the great religious festival and to bring their gifts to Jehovah. The king and his court were there and probably most of the leading people of the land. It was a time of great rejoicing because of the unusual prosperity, and we may be sure that the religious ceremonials were splendid and imposing.

Suddenly a strange figure appears upon the scene, clad in sheepskin and presenting a curious contrast to the well-dressed multitude. This uncouth-appearing

man begins to speak. Amos's real message is one of rebuke to Israel, but he is too tactful to allow that to be seen at once. He begins by predicting the destruction of Israel's bitterest foe, Damascus, and thus he wins the sympathy of his audience. Next he foretells the ruin of Gaza and other Philistine cities, and then of Tyre, Edom, Ammon, and Moab, giving in each case the cause of Jehovah's wrath against city or nation. The people become more and more interested. Then he predicts the destruction of Judah. As there is enmity between the two kingdoms the audience highly approve of this.

The message of Amos to Israel.—But now it is Israel's turn. Self-satisfied as they were, believing themselves to be the favorites of Jehovah, what must have been their amazement to hear his scathing words! "Thus saith Jehovah: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes." Then follows a long list of Israel's sins. They "turn justice to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth"; they "trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat"; They "afflict the just, take a bribe, and turn aside the needy." They "lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall"; they "sing idle songs to the sound of the viol"; and "invent for themselves instruments of music, like David"; but "they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph."

It will be seen that it is the higher classes whom Amos is rebuking. He feels, as all of the prophets after him did, that responsibility for the corruption

of the kingdom rests chiefly upon the rulers and the wealthy people. Amos insists that because the Israelites have received more than any other nation more is expected of them, and the greater will be their punishment.

We need not necessarily infer from the following splendid passage that Amos objects to the worship of Jehovah by means of sacrifices. Of course he worshiped that way himself. What he denounces is the attempt to bribe Jehovah, committing all manner of evil and then coming to the sanctuary with burnt-offerings and sacrifices. "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them. . . . Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

The reception of his message.—How was the message of Amos received? With scorn, as we should have expected. He was interrupted by the priest, Amaziah, and accused of conspiring against the king and told to depart from Bethel. "O thou seer, go, flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there: but prophesy not again any more in Bethel." After his courageous answer (7. 14–17) we hear no more of Amos, and we do not know how his prophecy happened to be written. It is probable that, since he could make no impression by means of the spoken word, he found a way of putting his message into this permanent form. To those who have had the teachings of Christianity there is nothing new in the truths that Amos uttered, yet to the people to whom he spoke they probably were new. The

great contribution of Amos to the progress of religion is the emphasis he laid on *social righteousness* and the primary importance of the *ethical demands* of Jehovah. In this he continued and intensified the teachings of Elijah.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Amos.

Jehovah's judgments upon neighboring nations, 1, 2. 1–5.
Jehovah's judgment upon Israel, 2. 6–16.
The transgressions of Israel, 3, 4, 5, 6.
Amos driven out of Bethel by the high priest, 7.

QUESTIONS

1. Where was the home of Amos? What was his occupation?
2. Where did he deliver his message?
3. For what purpose were the people assembled? Describe the scene.
4. What conditions called forth the message of Amos?
5. Enumerate the chief charges he makes against Israel.
6. What does he say of his call from Jehovah to deliver this message? Did he respond willingly?
7. What attributes of God does Amos emphasize?
8. How was the message of Amos received at Bethel?
9. Sum up the general principles upon which the teachings of Amos are based.
10. How did this untutored man know these things?

LESSON XXXII

HOSEA, THE PROPHET OF THE DIVINE LOVE

About twenty years after the time of Amos, appeared Hosea, who was a native of the northern kingdom. He was a very different man from Amos, who was austere, stern, and uncompromising in his demands for justice and right. Hosea is not less stringent than Amos in his ideas of justice, but he cannot stop there. He feels that the great heart of God is full of pity for his ignorant and defiant children, and that there must be some way to bring them into right relations with him. Thus he becomes the first teacher of God's love.

Hosea's unhappy experience and its result.—It was through a tragic experience in his home that Hosea came to believe in the forgiving love of God. He married a wife by the name of Gomer, probably a woman belonging to a lowly class of people. When he married her he believed in her and had every reason to expect happiness from the marriage, but she proved untrue to him and finally left him. She descends lower and lower, until at last in some way we can only conjecture, she is sold into slavery. Hosea sees her for sale in the slave market, buys her and takes her to his home, but he does not at first reinstate her to the position of wife and mother. She must go through a period of discipline and probation; she must repent and must turn to the right. If she does this, he will wed her again in love and trust.

And now it came to Hosea that his pity and love

for his faithless wife were like those of Jehovah for sinful Israel. It cannot be that he, a man, can surpass Jehovah in kindness and mercy. There is something in true love which makes it patient, long-suffering, not easily provoked, enduring all things, hoping all things. He *knew* because he loved. But how much greater must the love of God be than his love! It was this discovery that made Hosea a prophet. He believed the tragic experience was sent to him to teach him the divine love that he might teach it to his people. In the words of Plumptre's poem, "Gomer,"

> "And yet through all the mystery of my years,
> There runs a purpose which forbids that wail
> Of passionate despair. I have not lived
> At random, as a soul whom God forsakes,
> But evermore his spirit led me on;
> Prompted each purpose; taught my lips to speak,
> Stirred up within me that deep love, and now
> Reveals the inner secret."

From this time on for a series of years—we do not know how long—he delivered sermons to his people, fragments of which have come down to us in the book that bears his name. In many places the text is so corrupt as to be difficult of interpretation.

We do not know many of the incidents of Hosea's life. Like Isaiah, he gave his children names symbolical of passing conditions and events in his country. A son was named "Jezreel," the name of a little daughter signified "Unpitied," and that of another son, "Not my people."

Conditions rebuked by Hosea.—The corruption of the country is represented much the same in the book of Hosea as in the book of Amos: "There is no truth,

nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in the land. There is naught but swearing and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery." Crimes are committed even by priests. "As troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way toward Shechem."

In pleading accents Hosea urges the nation to turn from their evil ways. Always he represents Jehovah as speaking. Sometimes the people are Jehovah's unfaithful wife whom he is trying to bring back; sometimes Jehovah is the yearning father who reminds his children how he loved them and cared for them in their helpless infancy. Perhaps there is nothing finer in the book of Hosea than the following passages:

"When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. The more *the prophets* called them, the more they went from them: They sacrificed unto the Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. Yet I taught Ephraim to walk; I took them on my arms; but they knew not that I healed them."

"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? *how* shall I cast thee off, Israel? . . . My heart is turned within me, my compassions are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; . . . and I will not come in wrath."

"O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God; . . . I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely; . . . I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree, and his smell as Lebanon."

Hosea's influence upon the religion of Israel.—

It was the idea of God's redeeming love that *made* Israel. Other nations were loyal to their gods, but the great Hebrew teachers never ceased to remind the race of their profound obligation to Jehovah for bringing them up out of Egypt and leading them ever since. Every prophet after Hosea emphasized the *divine love*, and thus the race was brought to new and ever higher levels of religious experience.

"When we consider that all this was absolutely new, that these thoughts, in which humanity has been educated and which have consoled it for nearly three thousand years, were first spoken by Hosea, we must reckon him one of the greatest religious geniuses which the world has produced."[1]

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Hosea.

Jehovah's controversy with Israel, 4.
The infidelity of Israel rebuked, 5.
Jehovah pleads with Israel, 6. 10, 11, 14.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the conditions in Israel that are rebuked by Hosea.
2. Contrast Hosea with Amos.
3. Formulate Hosea's thought concerning God's relation to Israel.
4. What is the supreme demand of God, according to Hosea?
5. What do we know of Hosea's life?

NOTE.—In this lesson Hosea's experience with his unfaithful wife has been treated as a real one. It should be stated that many scholars regard the story as a parable.

[1] Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 50.

LESSON XXXIII

THE STORIES OF GENESIS

Not only did the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries leave behind them a body of literature known to us as prophecy, or prophetic books, but they were the earliest historians of the Hebrew race. Two different but parallel collections of narratives of their early traditions have been described (in Lesson V) as "J" and "E." The importance of these early records can hardly be overestimated, for as soon as the stories of the leading events were written down they began to acquire significance in shaping and unifying the ideals of the race.

There was a special reason for the writing of early Hebrew history. As has already been shown, the Hebrews believed that they were the chosen people of God, and that they had enjoyed divine favor as had no other race. The purpose of the early historians was not only to trace the origin of the race, but to reveal the dealings of God with them from the beginning, and to show how chastisement had followed upon disobedience and how prosperity had rewarded the doing of God's will. Thus the story of the past was told as a guide to the future.

Not only were the traditions regarding the beginnings of the Hebrew race put into writing at this time, but the prophetic historians, as was natural, recorded the traditions that had come down among their people for many generations concerning the creation of the world, the creation of man, and the main events in

the history of the world up to the time when the Hebrews emerged as a distinct race. The book in which these events are recorded is well named *Genesis*, which means "beginnings."

The value of the stories.—Many attempts have been made to reconcile the biblical stories of creation and of the earliest history of man with the findings of science, but without success. To attempt to find in these narratives historical and scientific accuracy is beside the point. We should go to them not for a knowledge of how the world was made, but for the moral and spiritual truth that shaped the early Hebrew ideals. It is a mistake to think that the ethical value of a narrative depends upon its historical accuracy.

Some of the early stories of Genesis were borrowed from Babylonia, doubtless through the Canaanites, who were in communication with the Babylonians long before the Hebrews entered the land. The creation stories of Babylonia and other nations of antiquity, however, are full of crass polytheism, and usually without moral or spiritual value. Nowhere do the Hebrews show more plainly their power of transmuting into something finer all that they touched than in the way they treated these narratives, purging them of their grosser elements and making them the vehicle of religious truth. Even their earliest account of creation (in the second chapter of Genesis) is dignified, reverent, and beautiful. They wrote *God* into everything, and man he created in his own image. Though they thought of God as anthropomorphic (in the form of a man), he is just, upright and holy, and concerned for the welfare of man.

The Garden of Eden.—Following the earliest account of the creation of man is the story of the Garden

of Eden, with its magic trees, its talking serpent, and its naïve conception of God. It is the result of the attempt of the Hebrews to answer a number of questions, the chief of which is, How did sin come into the world? We could ill afford to do without the story because of the influence which has been exerted by certain great truths it sets forth, namely, that man, and not God, is responsible for the presence of sin in the world, that disobedience puts a barrier between God and man, that innocence is not virtue, and that character is developed through struggle. It was only when Adam and Eve were turned out of the Garden of Eden to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow that their redemption began.

The story of the Flood.—The account in Genesis opens (at 6. 5) with a description of the widespread evil in the world, which has reached such proportions that God repents that he has made man and decides to wipe the human race almost out of existence and begin over again. Most early nations had a tradition of a great deluge, which may point to some actual inundation of a portion of the ancient world. The story of the Hebrews is especially like that of Babylonia. If they borrowed it, as they probably did, they told it with a religious purpose. The Flood is a necessary judgment upon a wicked world, and is sent as a last resort. God reluctantly destroys men, but gives the rainbow as a symbol of hope and a pledge of his continued interest for the future.

The tower of Babel.—This story is one of many that arose in answer to questions that naturally occurred regarding the origins of things. Primitive man asked the same questions that we do, but could not go to history or science for an answer as we can, so he had

to draw upon his imagination to solve his problems. The story of the tower of Babel attempts to answer the question, Why are there different languages in the world? It may aim also to explain the origin of certain lofty buildings in Babylonia. Yet even here the story-teller found a religious lesson. God punished the builders of the lofty tower for their boasting and self-assertion.

Stories of the patriarchs.—The period from Abraham to and including Joseph corresponds to what in other nations is known as the heroic age, when the founders of the race, or its greatest heroes, accomplish their deeds of prowess. The Hebrew patriarchs are closely connected with the Canaanite sites or shrines. There is one cycle of stories centering about Abraham, and another of which Jacob is the hero, which connect the Hebrews with the East. The last cycle of narratives, the Joseph stories, with their Egyptian background, are full of local color, and thoroughly true to all we know of Egyptian life and customs. All these stories are told with the same high moral feeling that characterizes the prophets.

Abraham the friend of God.—According to the traditions of the Hebrews, their history begins with the migration of their great ancestor, Abraham, from his home in Mesopotamia (according to another version from Ur of southern Babylonia) to Canaan. In obedience to the divine command he started with his family and servants, flocks and herds to a new land which was to be given to him and his descendants.

Attention has already been called to the fact that the Hebrews were more likely than any other race to ascribe high moral and spiritual qualities to their heroes, and less likely to place supreme emphasis upon

deeds of strength and skill. It speaks volumes for them that they considered themselves descended from an ancestor whose proudest title was that he was "the friend of God." The character of Abraham is one of singular loftiness, and its influence in permanently shaping the ideals of the race can hardly be overestimated.

Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.—Isaac is in no sense a leader and his life is rather colorless and uneventful. Jacob is a strange mixture of good and evil, in his youth cunning and grasping, but by reason of much discipline eventually obtaining the mastery over the baser elements in his nature. There is no finer story in the Bible than that of Joseph. His character is an unusually attractive one, and the stories concerning him had an influence for good upon generation after generation of Hebrew youth. He was conspicuous for uprightness, industry, and loyalty, and his spirit of forgiveness as displayed toward the brothers who had conspired to bring him to his death falls not far short of some of the noblest teachings of Christ.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Genesis.

The Garden of Eden, 2, 3.
The Flood, 6, 7, 8.
The tower of Babel, 11. 1–9.
The migration of Abraham to Canaan, 12. 1–8.

QUESTIONS

1. By what class of men was the earliest Hebrew history written? About what time? With what motive?

2. Are the earliest narratives historically accurate? If not, what is their value?

3. Bring out some of the great moral and spiritual truths found in the stories of the Garden of Eden and the fall of man, and the Flood.

4. Contrast these stories as told by the Hebrews with corresponding stories of other nations.

5. What is meant by the "patriarchal age"? Name the chief "patriarchs."

LESSON XXXIV

THE FALL OF THE NORTHERN KINGDOM

After the death of Jeroboam II, in 745, things moved rapidly in the direction of Amos' prediction that the nation would be destroyed. During the next thirteen years there were six kings, four of whom were assassinated. Under the third of these kings, Menahem, the Assyrian monarch Tiglath-pileser III took the opportunity of invading Palestine. Menahem bought him off by an enormous tribute (about two million dollars) and at once proceeded to collect the money from the "mighty men of wealth" in the kingdom. This expression must mean the "well-to-do," for there were sixty thousand of them, each of whom paid fifty shekels.

The Aramæan kingdom.[1]—This kingdom, as we have learned, was Israel's nearest neighbor on the north. We have found the two kingdoms sometimes at war with each other and sometimes allied for mutual defense. The Aramæan kingdom was composed of a number of royal cities, of which the chief was Damascus, a city which was especially noted for its wealth and its manufacture of articles of luxury. It was largely from Damascus that the Hebrews acquired their luxurious tastes.

The Aramæans were a highly civilized race, possessing alphabetic writing, derived from Phœnicia. The Aramæan merchants were the great commercial leaders

[1] "Aram" is the biblical name of the country extending from the western frontier of Babylonia to the highlands of western Asia. The Septuagint and Vulgate versions render the name by "Syria."

of the age, penetrating all parts of Assyria and other countries. Wherever they went they introduced their language, until it gradually became the language of the entire "fertile crescent." It even displaced its sister language, Hebrew, in Palestine. (Recall that in the time of Jesus, Aramaic was the language of Palestine.) Damascus was so strong as to be able to block the progress of Assyria westward for three centuries. The Aramæans, Phœnicians, and Hebrews held the Assyrian armies at bay until the eighth century.

The Assyrian empire and its methods.— Probably no empire has ever been so hated and feared as was the Assyrian. For a period of about two hundred years, terminating in 607 (or 606), that mighty empire dominated all western Asia. Their country east of the Tigris (see map) was colonized at an early date by emigrants from Babylonia. The Assyrians belonged to the same racial group as the Hebrews, Phœnicians and Aramæans, namely, the Semitic, but they were the most warlike and fierce of all. The organization of the Assyrian kingdom was essentially military. Industrial development was not especially encouraged, and the country systematically plundered its neighbors.

No nation of that era kept as full records of its own history as Assyria, and these records are filled with terrible deeds. Her kings boast of the fertile fields devastated, of the cities given to the flames, and of the slaughter of men, women, and children. By B. C. 700 the Assyrian empire included all the "fertile crescent," and soon the conquest of Egypt followed. The capital city had been Assur, but Sennacherib, the most famous of all the Assyrian kings, built a new capital, Nineveh. This remarkable city, with its vast palaces and im-

posing temples, stretched for two and one half miles along both banks of the Tigris.

The Assyrian invasion of Israel.—In 745 the Assyrian throne was seized by Tiglath-pileser IV, who proved a powerful monarch. The kings of Israel paid tribute to him until Pekah's time. Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Damascus attempted to force Ahaz of Judah into an alliance to try to throw off the Assyrian yoke—a hopeless undertaking. Ahaz instead of joining them threw himself into the arms of Assyria, with what consequences we shall see in our study of the southern kingdom. Tiglath-pileser took Damascus in 734, killing King Rezin. The crushing of Damascus removed a barrier that had long protected Israel from Assyria.

Tiglath-pileser at once invaded Israel and carried into captivity the principal inhabitants of the territory north of the plain of Jezreel. Pekah was put to death and the new king, Hoshea, was forced to pay a heavy tribute. Thus Israel fell completely into the hands of Assyria.

The fall of the northern kingdom.—Hoshea took the occasion of Tiglath-pileser's death soon afterward to refuse tribute, at the same time entering into an alliance with Egypt. The new king, Shalmaneser V, sent an army which overran the country and laid siege to Samaria, which, thanks to its fortunate situation, was able to hold out for three years. The capture finally took place in B. C. 722, under Sargon II, who by this time had succeeded to the throne. About twenty-seven thousand of the inhabitants, including the wealthy classes and all the leaders who were likely to make trouble, were carried into captivity and settled in Mesopotamia and Medea, "in Halah, and on

the Habor, the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes." Colonists were brought in from Babylonia and Aram to take the places of the exiled Israelites. Sargon in his annals has made a statement as to what became of the people, which is in harmony with the biblical account:

"At the beginning of my reign, in my first year . . . Samaria I besieged, I captured. 27,290 people from its midst I carried captive. 50 chariots I took there as an addition to my royal force. . . . I returned and made more than formerly to dwell. People from lands which my hands had captured I settled in the midst. My officers over them I appointed. Tribute and taxes I imposed upon them after the Assyrian manner."[1]

Significance of the destruction of Israel.— The final extinction of the northern kingdom, the larger and more important section of the Hebrews, made a profound impression upon the members of the race who survived and cannot fail to impress the student of Hebrew history. The writer of the book of Kings saw in it inevitable punishment for apostasy from Jehovah. We have watched the course of the kingdom as it plunged headlong to its ruin. We know that the ruling classes were given over to selfish and luxurious living when they should have been straining every nerve in making their country strong to resist attack. Certainly, one chief cause of the downfall was the corruption within. The immediate reason for Israel's destruction was that she lay in the way of Assyria's lust for power. And yet in the light of the knowledge of God's laws that we have to-day, was not the ancient

[1] Winckler's Keilschrifttexte Sargons, p. 1, as quoted in *Archæology and the Bible*, George A. Barton, p. 369.

writer speaking truth when he assigned sin as the real cause of the kingdom's downfall?

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The second book of Kings.

Assyrian depredations in the reign of Pekah, 15. 29.
The alliance of Pekah and Rezin, and the capture of Damascus, 16. 5, 6, 9.
The fall of Samaria, 17. 1–6.
The condition of the remaining inhabitants of Samaria, 17. 24–41.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the Aramæans and their kingdom.
2. What was their chief city and for what noted?
3. What were the chief characteristics of the Assyrian empire?
4. What was Assyria's chief city? Locate on the map.
5. Give the main facts regarding the fall of the northern Hebrew kingdom, with causes and date.
6. What became of the "ten lost tribes"?
7. What literary heritage have we from the northern kingdom? (See Lesson XLIX.)

LESSON XXXV

THE FIRST CENTURY OF THE SOUTHERN KINGDOM

THE reasons why the southern kingdom endured one hundred and thirty-six years longer than the northern have already been partially given. They are chiefly these: 1. *Its location.* It was less exposed to invasion

Photo by Ismar J Peritz

THE WILDERNESS OF JUDAH

by the powerful nations of the east and north than the northern kingdom, for on the east were Moab and the Dead Sea, on the south the desert, and on the west Philistia. 2. *The character of the country.* Other nations did not covet Judah's rocky soil and barren hills.

Yet, because of the infertility of the soil, the people were less prosperous than in Israel, and not so early a prey to the evils that accompany wealth. The severe struggle for existence developed the hardier virtues. 3. *The temple and the Davidic dynasty.* These furnished an element of security wanting in the northern kingdom. For four hundred years, with the single exception of an interval of six years, a descendant of David sat upon the throne of Judah. Thus the history of that kingdom is on the whole peaceful and in striking contrast to the anarchy and revolution of Israel.

From Rehoboam to Ahaziah.—Little of importance happened in the reign of Rehoboam. One of the chief events was the invasion of Shishak of Egypt, who plundered the temple. He took away "all the shields of gold which Solomon had made. And king Rehoboam made in their stead shields of brass."

Of the twenty kings who ruled Judah from the time of the division of the kingdom to the destruction of the state in 586, less than half are important enough to be treated in the limited space at our disposal here. One of the most prominent kings of Judah's first century was Jehoshaphat, of whom we heard as Ahab's ally in the Aramæan wars. The alliance between the two kings was cemented by the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Athaliah was as unprincipled as her mother, though not quite equal to her in strength. This marriage proved most unfortunate for Judah, for through it a temple of the Phœnician Baal was erected in Jerusalem, and the heathenism and profligacy of Ahab's court were introduced.

Judah's contest with Phœnician Baalism.—It will be recalled that when Jehu killed Jehoram,

king of Israel, he put to death at the same time Ahaziah, the king of Judah. According to custom, the position of Athaliah as queen mother was very important, and she did not propose to give it up. She seized the throne and succeeded in putting to death all the royal princes (her grandsons) except one. The infant, Jehoash, was rescued by his aunt (who, according to Chronicles, was the wife of the high priest, Jehoiada), and was secretly brought up in the temple until he was seven years old. One of the most dramatic scenes in the Old Testament is that in which the boy is suddenly brought forth from the temple by the high priest and with the support of the royal bodyguard, is proclaimed king of Judah. "Then he brought out the king's son, and put the crown upon him, . . . and they made him king, and anointed him; and they clapped their hands, and said, *Long* live the king." We note here the increasing power of the priesthood, who can make and unmake kings. "And all the people of the land went to the house of Baal, and brake it down; his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. . . . So all the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was quiet. And Athaliah they had slain with the sword at the king's house." Her reign had lasted six years. This reformation corresponds to the great contest with Baalism in the northern kingdom in the time of Elijah, but is on a much smaller scale.

The reign of Jehoash.—In his earlier years Jehoash was under the influence of the priesthood and there was a strong reaction against Phœnician Baalism. A tendency of the times is shown in the fact that when Jehoash wished to make repairs on the temple, which had long been neglected, it was found that the priests

had been appropriating for their own use the money which had been contributed by the people for that purpose. Already Jerusalem was becoming priest-ridden. Though Jehoash made sweeping reformation in regard to these matters, yet later in his reign he permitted the revival of idolatrous practices. The most important single event in the reign of Jehoash was the invasion by Hazael of Damascus, when an attack on Jerusalem was averted only by the payment of immense tribute, taken from the temple treasures.

The prosperous reign of Uzziah (Azariah).—The reign of Uzziah (790–739) was contemporaneous with that of Jeroboam II, of Israel, and in many respects the events and tendencies of the two reigns were similar. Uzziah was placed upon the throne at the age of sixteen, after his father, Amaziah (the son of Jehoash), had been assassinated in a popular insurrection. Amaziah's head had been turned by victories in Edom, and he challenged Jehoash of Israel to a trial of strength, the result of which was that Amaziah was defeated, taken prisoner, the temple and palace rifled, and breaches made in the walls of Jerusalem. The people of Judah, indignant, rose up against their king and slew him. Uzziah proved an able and energetic ruler, and in his reign of fifty-one years great prosperity came to Judah. He made successful campaigns against some of his enemies and extended the kingdom both east and south. He strongly fortified Jerusalem and other important places in his domain. He developed the internal resources of the country and established new trade routes which not only brought in wealth but opened the door of a larger world to Judah. All this resulted in much the same conditions as were rebuked in Israel by Amos and Hosea. Class distinctions arose; foreign ways

and customs were introduced; arrogance, luxury, and the oppression of the poor were rife. Our best authority for this period is the prophecy of Isaiah. The prophecy of Micah also throws light on these conditions.

Toward the close of his life Uzziah was a victim of leprosy, and his weak son, Jotham, shared with him the responsibilities of state. The powerful king, Tiglath-pileser IV, was on the Assyrian throne and was beginning to conquer the neighboring weaker nations, one by one. It was only a matter of time when Judah would be endangered. The approaching death of Uzziah, when the reins of government would fall into unworthy hands, must have been viewed with grave concern by the best people of the kingdom. Among these was the prophet Isaiah.

The literary activity of the period.—The greatest work of the period is the document known as "J," written by a prophet of Judah, and discussed in another lesson. The so-called Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20. 20–23) is believed to have been written during this period.

Biblical Sources:

Rehoboam's reign, 1 Kings 14. 21–31.
Jehu's murder of Ahaziah, 2 Kings 9. 22–28.
Athaliah's reign and accession of Jehoash, 2 Kings, 11.
The reign of Jehoash, 2 Kings, 12.
Amaziah's defeat and death, 2 Kings 14. 8–22.
The reign of Uzziah, 2 Kings 15. 1–7.

Questions

1. Give several reasons why the southern kingdom endured longer than the northern. How much longer?
2. Who was Athaliah, and what was her connection with the history of Judah?
3. Describe the contest with Phœnician Baalism in Judah.
4. Compare this contest with that in Israel in the time of Elijah.
5. Give some tendencies in the reign of Jehoash.
6. Characterize the reign of Uzziah, especially noting the changed social conditions.

LESSON XXXVI

THE PROPHET ISAIAH

Uzziah died in 739. In this year Isaiah received his "call." The prophet was young at the time, perhaps twenty to twenty-five years old, and from that time for over forty years he was the most important figure in Jerusalem. He was not only a great prophet but a wise statesman, the ablest Judah ever had. He is believed to have belonged to a wealthy and aristocratic family; he was at home in court circles, and an intimate of kings. So far as we know he never held any official position.

Isaiah is sometimes called the Prince of the Prophets. If the magnitude of the work he accomplished be the criterion, the estimate is just. The fact that Judah did not go down before the mighty Assyrian empire, as her sister nation did, but endured nearly a century and a half longer, is due largely to Isaiah.

Isaiah's vision.—Most of the Hebrew prophets received their "call" through a vision. The great experience which made Isaiah a prophet may have been directly after the death of Uzziah, when he was filled with forebodings regarding the future of his country. He had gone to the temple, and there came to him in that holy place a revelation of God such as he had never had before. All unrealities vanished and God himself filled all the temple. Around his throne were choirs of angels singing, "Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."

In the presence of the holiness and majesty of Jehovah,

Isaiah was profoundly impressed with his own unworthiness and with the guilt of his nation. But an angel touched his lips with a live coal from the altar as a sign that his sin was forgiven. "And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me." He consecrated himself at once to the task of strengthening and purifying his country.

The political situation.—Four years after the death of Uzziah, Jotham was succeeded by his son Ahaz, young, weak, and unprincipled. The Assyrian storm was now threatening. Soon Judah was invaded by Rezin of Damascus and Pekah of Israel, who attempted to force Ahaz to join a coalition against Assyria. When Ahaz heard of the conspiracy "his heart trembled, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the forest tremble with the wind." Isaiah counseled calmness, saying, "Fear not, neither let thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands." Ahaz, however, hastened to throw himself at the feet of the Assyrian king, sending him the treasure of temple and palace, and the message, "I am thy servant and thy son: come up, and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me." The Assyrian king came promptly. The consequences of this policy were far-reaching. Judah was reduced to a condition of vassalage, with burdensome tribute to pay. With all his might Isaiah opposed the vassalage to Assyria, yet after the die was cast he used his influence to keep Judah from repudiating the alliance. He must have known well that to defy that mighty power would mean destruction to the little kingdom.

The influence of Ahaz upon the religious life of his

nation was demoralizing. When he went to pay homage to Tiglath-pileser at Damascus he saw there an altar which he ordered duplicated for the temple in Jerusalem. The brazen altar of the temple was displaced, and Ahaz introduced many features of the Assyrian worship of "the hosts of heaven."

Isaiah as a social reformer.—In the face of the dangers which threatened from the outside, the ruling classes should have been preparing in every way for the protection of their country. Instead they were given over to frivolity, luxury, and vice. Isaiah, though of high rank, stepped out of his class and attacked the people of wealth and power, the rulers of the nation. He was unsparing in his denunciation of the social evils of his day, and predicted the imminent destruction of both kingdoms. From his prophecy we get our most vivid idea of the corruption of the times. The land was full of idols; widows and orphans were the prey of the wealthy; bribes were taken by administrators of justice; drunkenness was on every hand. The rulers were worse than the people and the priests as bad as the rulers. The women were no better than the men. Is there not something extremely modern about this picture of the fashionable women of Jerusalem twenty-seven hundred years ago? They "are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet." For their frivolity Isaiah says they are doomed to destruction.

Like Amos, Isaiah says that Jehovah despises sacrifices and pompous temple worship when by them wrongdoers are only trying to bribe him to condone their sins against their fellowmen; that Jehovah cares less for sacrifices than for *moral conduct*. A terrible

judgment must come upon Judah for her sins, for Jehovah does not allow himself to be mocked. Yet it is not a hopeless doctrine that Isaiah preaches. There will be a faithful remnant who will be true to Jehovah, and this remnant will be the preserver of all that is best in Judah's life.

The reign of Hezekiah.—In 720, two years after the destruction of the northern kingdom, Hezekiah succeeded his father, Ahaz, on the throne. At first he paid the huge tribute demanded by Assyria, but soon there grew up in Judah a party which insisted upon an alliance with Egypt for the purpose of breaking the Assyrian yoke. Had it not been for Isaiah, Hezekiah would have committed the kingdom to this fatal policy. Never could Egypt be relied upon for any real help.

Through the influence of Isaiah certain reforms were attempted by Hezekiah. It would seem from the condition of the country fifty years later that few of these were permanent, yet there is a reference in the book of Jeremiah[1] to a social reformation at this time. These reforms were all in the direction of abolishing idolatry and purifying the worship of Jehovah. Hezekiah also strengthened the defenses of his country, added to the military equipment, and constructed an aqueduct for the purpose of supplying Jerusalem with water in case of a siege. He checked the inroads of the Philistines, encouraged agriculture and commerce, and added to the prosperity of the country.

Sennacherib's invasions.—While Hezekiah was still on the throne, Sennacherib, the most powerful of all Assyria's kings, succeeded his father, Sargon II, on the throne. In spite of Isaiah's warnings, Hezekiah allied himself with other small states, who defied Assyria,

[1] Jer. 26. 19.

expecting the support of Egypt. Forty-six towns of Judah were besieged and captured, but upon the payment of enormous tribute Sennacherib spared Jerusalem.

Some of the circumstances connected with Sennacherib's second invasion[1] are so remarkable as to make it forever memorable. Sennacherib on his way to attack Egypt demanded the surrender of Jerusalem. Hezekiah and the leading men were alarmed and turned to Isaiah for counsel. He advised refusal to surrender, saying Jehovah would smite their enemies and protect his holy city. And then a wonderful thing happened. The armies of Sennacherib suddenly retreated, and Jerusalem was saved (see Byron's "The Destruction of Sennacherib"). History gives no certain reason for the withdrawal, but the most plausible explanation is that a pestilence broke out in the army. Isaiah was vindicated and henceforth the people had great confidence in him.

The religious teachings of Isaiah.—Isaiah exercised a more direct influence upon his own times than previous prophets had done because for many years he was able to apply his teachings to the changing political conditions of the day. While fully indorsing the religious teachings of Amos and Hosea, he made important contributions of his own. He emphasized the holiness and majesty of Jehovah and the duty of trusting him. His great historical and religious importance is that he saved Judah and thus saved the Hebrew religion. By safely passing the Assyrian crisis Judah was able to endure until her roots were deep enough to withstand the destruction of the Hebrew state.

Two ideas stand out prominently in his teachings:

[1] Some scholars doubt the historicity of Sennacherib's second invasion.

1. That Jerusalem cannot be destroyed. Jeremiah, one hundred years later, found the people smugly trusting in this prediction of Isaiah, and blind to the danger that threatened them. 2. Though Judah is to perish, a remnant will survive. He looks forward to a sifting process by which the best of the race will survive and be purified by suffering. That is exactly what

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

MORESHETH GATH

The home of the prophet Micah

happened more than a hundred years later. If these two ideas seem inconsistent with each other, it must be said that Isaiah's message changed with changed conditions.

Isaiah gathered about him a society of disciples who perpetuated his teachings. A late tradition says that he died a martyr in the reign of Manasseh.

Chapters 40–66 of the book of Isaiah belong to a later period, as will be shown in another lesson.

Micah, the prophet of social justice.—Micah was a prophet of the southern kingdom contemporary with Isaiah. Like Amos, he belonged to the peasant class, and, like him, he used all his power of denunciation against the higher classes, who were oppressing the poor. Micah predicted the destruction of Jerusalem at the very time Isaiah was declaring its inviolability.

BIBLICAL SOURCES:

Isaiah's call, Isa. 6. 1–8.
Song of the vineyard, Isa. 5. 1–7.
The corruption of the land, Isa. 3, 5, 10.
Jehovah's demands, Isa. 1. 16–20.
The coming judgment on Judah, Isa. 5. 26–29.
Hezekiah's reforms, 2 Kings 18. 1–6.
Isaiah's advice sought by Hezekiah, 2 Kings 19. 1–7.

QUESTIONS

1. Give some facts with regard to Isaiah's life.
2. What was Isaiah's chief service to his country?
3. What were his fundamental teachings?
4. What was there *new* in his conception of God?
5. Discuss the political situation in the time of Ahaz, and Isaiah's relation to it.
6. Mention some of the chief abuses which he condemns.
7. What was the nature of Hezekiah's reforms?
8. Describe Sennacherib's invasions.
9. How long did Isaiah's period of activity last? Approximate dates?
10. Commit to memory Isa. 11. 1–9, and Micah 6. 8.

LESSON XXXVII

THE REACTION UNDER MANASSEH

Upon Hezekiah's death in 692 his twelve-year-old son, Manasseh, became king and reigned nearly fifty-five years. At his father's death Manasseh came under the influence of the anti-prophetic party. He was a product of the harem, and the intrigues of the harem and court had been scathingly rebuked by Isaiah. Manasseh's reign was an unfortunate one for Judah, for, not being in sympathy with the prophetic party, who had the real welfare of the country at heart, he was the leader in a violent reaction against the teachings of the prophets. He was most subservient to Assyria, and an imitator of Assyrian ways, especially in religious matters, and he largely undid the good work of Hezekiah.

The return to heathenism under Manasseh.— He restored the altars to heathen gods that had been torn down by Hezekiah, he set up an asherah in the temple, he introduced the Assyrian star worship, and the people had altars to the "hosts of heaven" erected on their housetops. Ahaz was the first to introduce this worship, but Manasseh carried it much further. He restored the terrible rite of child-sacrifice,[1] offering his own son to Moloch. Believing the Assyrian gods to be more powerful than Jehovah, he was doubtless

[1] Moloch (or Molech) was a deity worshiped by the Israelites, especially by the people of Judah, toward the close of the monarchy. The chief feature of the worship was the sacrifice of children. The place was the Valley of Hinnom (called the Topheth) just outside of Jerusalem. According to 1 Kings 11. 7, the cult was introduced by Solomon. It was regarded by the Hebrews as Canaanite in origin (Deut. 12. 29–31).

honest in his desire that his people should adopt the Assyrian worship.

Manasseh violently persecuted the prophets, many of whom were forced to go into hiding. "Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." Heathenism was again intrenched, but the prophetic party was not dead. The prophets were quietly working for the salvation of the nation.

Reasons for the reaction.—From the fact that the masses of the people were apparently in sympathy with Manasseh, we know that Hezekiah's reforms were the work of a minority party—the prophetic—and did not represent any real change in the religious attitude of the people as a whole. Isaiah and Micah had denounced idolatry and immorality, but the reforms that had come about as a result of their preaching were too drastic for the masses of the people. Only by degrees can such sweeping changes be brought about, and Hezekiah did not live long enough to see his reforms accomplished. Moreover, the people were disappointed because Isaiah's prophecies concerning the destruction of Assyria had not been fulfilled. The Assyrian gods were clearly winning. Thus the party hostile to prophetic teaching gained prestige. The ignorant masses still clung to the older cults of worship. The teachings of the prophets were too strict and sober for them; Isaiah's ideas of morality were beyond their comprehension.

Assyrian customs too were the fashion, and fashion is potent even in religion. The Hebrews had come to accept their vassalage and even to admire their once hated enemy. Assyria was the most powerful nation in the world, while Judah was small and obscure.

Remember that the Hebrews as a whole were not yet monotheists. Though they worshiped Jehovah as their national god, they believed the gods of the other nations had as real existence as their own. A necessary accompaniment of such a belief is that in case of a conflict between nations the victorious nation has the stronger gods. What wonder that the Assyrian worship obtained a large following among the Hebrews? There is an interesting passage in 2 Kings 18, in which the Hebrews are taunted by an emissary of the Assyrian king: "Hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, Jehovah will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria?"

The remarkable thing is that Jehovah worship could survive when the Hebrews were constantly being beaten by their powerful neighbors. The fact that it did endure is chiefly due to the prophets, who had an explanation for Judah's humiliations. Isaiah, and after him other prophets, declared that it was not because Jehovah was weaker than the gods of other nations that they were beaten, nor was it because he had forgotten them; it was because he was angry with them for their sins, and was punishing them; yet he was ready to forgive them whenever they would turn to him. This new conception of Jehovah was eventually accepted, and the more the race were persecuted and humiliated the more they clung to Jehovah.

The work of the prophets during Manasseh's reign.—They were in a small minority, and it must have required great courage to take a stand which meant condemnation of the king and his policies. According to tradition, Isaiah met his death at this time. The great outburst of prophetic activity in the

reign of Josiah seems to indicate that while apparently inactive the prophets were at this time writing and gathering together the writings of their predecessors. The sermons of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah evidently were collected and edited during this period. Many think that the book of Deuteronomy was written at this time.

Assyria at the zenith of her power.—The mighty empire with which the Hebrews had had to contend for three centuries was soon to decline. Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon (681–668) conquered Egypt, and that event, which occurred during Manasseh's reign, marked the climax of Assyrian power. Esarhaddon's son Ashurbanipal, whose reign overlapped Josiah's, though not a great military leader, was one of the most enlightened rulers of antiquity. Assyria was the inheritor of Babylonian culture, and this monarch did all he could to revive it. He built a great library at Nineveh, and filled it with the religious, scientific, and literary works of the past. This was the earliest library in western Asia known to us. A great collection of twenty-two thousand clay tablets, now in the British Museum, was discovered in the ruins of this library, where they had been lying on the floor for twenty-five hundred years. From this library come a majority of the inscriptions which throw light on the history of the ancient East. With the death of Ashurbanipal began the decline of Assyria.

The fall of Nineveh.—With the destruction of Nineveh in 607 (or 606) the Assyrian empire fell, and a great shout of exultation went up from the Nile to the Caspian Sea. Scholars are not fully agreed as to the foes that accomplished the ruin of the city, but it seems probable that it was taken by the Medes, a people

who occupied the territory between the Zagros Mountains and the Caspian Sea, and the Chaldeans, whose chief city was Babylon. Nineveh fell never to rise again, and for hundreds of years no one knew where it had stood. Even the Assyrian tongue passed away, and soon Aramæan became the language of the land. If we had been living at the time when the proud empire was at her height, perhaps we should have little thought that the obscure, struggling Hebrew nation would, twenty-five hundred years later, have a place of honor in history second to no nation, while Assyria would have passed into oblivion. What caused the difference?

The prophecy of Nahum.—This remarkable little book is a song of triumph over the approaching fall of Nineveh. It is a poem of great power and rare poetic beauty. It is filled with vivid pictures of the warfare of that day: "Woe to the bloody city! it is all full of lies and rapine; the prey departeth not. The noise of the whip, and the noise of the rattling wheels, and prancing horses, and bounding chariots, the horseman mounting, and the flashing sword, and the glittering spear, and a multitude of slain, and a great heap of corpses." "Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles are at rest; thy people are scattered upon the mountains, and there is none to gather them. There is no assuaging of thy hurt; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the report of thee clap their hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually?"

The prophecy of Zephaniah.—About the year 626 hordes of Scythians, a wandering race of Indo-European stock who lived near the Danube River, poured through Asia Minor on their way to Egypt. They were the forerunners of the barbarians who overthrew the Roman

empire, and wherever they went they left devastation in their wake. The cities along the coast, especially in Philistia, suffered unspeakably from their ravages. Jerusalem had every reason to expect the same fate, and the prophet Zephaniah took the opportunity to warn the people of the approaching calamity as Jehovah's judgment upon a sinful nation. The Scythians passed on without visiting Jerusalem, but the fear inspired by them doubtless had something to do with creating in the Hebrews a proper spirit for the acceptance of the reforms soon to be made by Josiah.

BIBLICAL SOURCES:

Manasseh's reign, 2 Kings 21.
The destruction of Nineveh, The book of Nahum.
Jehovah's Day of Wrath, Zephaniah 1.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the reactionary work of Manasseh.
2. Why were Hezekiah's reforms not permanent?
3. Give some of the reasons why the masses of the people were not in sympathy with these reforms.
4. Why was Assyrian worship popular?
5. How do you account for the fact that the Hebrew religion persisted against such odds?
6. When was the Assyrian empire at the height of its power?
7. Name several of its most important rulers.
8. What is the subject of the prophecy of Nahum?
9. What occasioned Zephaniah's prophecy?

LESSON XXXVIII

THE REFORMS UNDER JOSIAH

MANASSEH'S successor was his son, Amon, who followed in the evil ways of his father, but whose reign, fortunately, lasted only two years. He was assassinated in his own palace by his servants; "And the people of the land made his son, Josiah, king in his place."

Josiah was only eight years old when he came to the throne. His reign of thirty-one years was one of the most important and progressive periods in the history of Judah, for in it occurred the so-called "Deuteronomic Reform," which was the most successful attempt yet made to drive the old heathenism out of the land and to purify and strengthen the worship of Jehovah. This reform was brought about through the agency of Josiah, who was the best of all the kings of Judah.

It seems strange that Josiah should have been so utterly different from his father and his grandfather. This is partly accounted for by the fact that in some way—just how we do not know—he came under the control of sympathizers with the prophetic party. It has been conjectured that Zephaniah the prophet was his teacher, for he is thought to have been of royal blood, a descendant of Hezekiah. It is possible that Hilkiah, later high priest, had much to do with Josiah's training. At the time Josiah was growing up Jeremiah was preaching and the doctrines of the prophetic school were coming into greater and greater prominence. At any rate, by the time Josiah was old enough to make

decisions for himself he was fully in sympathy with the prophetic party.

Finding the book of the law.—In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign (B. C. 621) he ordered extensive repairs on the temple. While these were in progress a remarkable thing happened. A book now believed by scholars to have been the larger part of Deuteronomy was found in the temple by the high priest, Hilkiah. He handed it to Shaphan, the scribe, who read it and carried it to the king. The reading of the book to Josiah made a great impression upon him, and he "rent his clothes" in consternation. The reason for his alarm is plainly found in the book of Deuteronomy (28. 15–68), for terrible curses are pronounced upon those who do not keep the law as laid down in that book. At the same time all possible blessings are promised to those who keep it (28. 1–14). Josiah knew that the law of the book had not been kept, and he feared that Jehovah in his anger would bring the same fate upon Judah that had befallen Israel.

The reading of the book to the people.—At once he dispatched messengers to Huldah the prophetess to learn whether Jehovah's judgment might be averted. Her answer was that because of the devout spirit manifested by Josiah the doom would be *deferred*. In his eager desire that he and his people should fulfill all the commands of the law, Josiah called the elders of the people together and read them the book. One of the most impressive pictures in the Bible is that of the good young king, standing by the pillar in the temple, reading the law to his people, and pledging himself "with all his heart and all his soul" to obey it. "And all the people stood to the covenant," thus bind-

ing themselves to obey it. Thus the Hebrews adopted their most important code of written law and *their first authoritative book.*

Josiah then threw himself with all the ardor of his nature into bringing about obedience to every detail of the law throughout his kingdom. The chief reason we believe the newly found book to have been Deuteronomy is that the reforms inaugurated, which are fully described in Second Kings, are exactly those that would have had to be initiated in order to meet the demands of Deuteronomy. Incidentally, we learn from the account of these reforms the appalling moral and religious condition of the country.

Reforms to meet the demands of the new book. —1. Worship was centralized at Jerusalem. It was made illegal to offer sacrifices anywhere but at the temple. What was the reason for this remarkable innovation? It was simply this: All efforts to control the worship at the local shrines had failed. These "high places" had been seats of Canaanite worship before they were taken possession of by the Israelites, and thus drunkenness and immorality were introduced into Jehovah worship. If all worship could be centralized at Jerusalem, it could be controlled. The religion of Jehovah itself was at stake, and the steps actually taken seemed the only way to save it. All the priests of the local shrines were deposed and provision was made for them in connection with the temple service. "Nevertheless the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of Jehovah in Jerusalem, but they did eat unleavened bread among their brethren."

2. All the "high places" were abolished. The heathen altars, asherim, pillars, images, and all symbols of

Canaanite worship[1] were destroyed, as were also the altars of the Assyrian gods. The worship of heathen

[1] The "high places" were local sanctuaries, so called because they were usually situated on a hill. Here the Canaanites worshiped Baal and Astarte with licentious rites. When the Hebrews entered Canaan they took over these sanctuaries without removing symbols of the Canaanite worship, of which the altar, asherah

SUPPOSED HIGH PLACE AT TAANACH
(After Sellin.)

and pillars were the symbol. Indeed, Hebrews and Canaanites often worshiped at the same altar An asherah (plural, asherim) was a post of wood and a pillar an upright stone, both having symbolical significance. The disastrous results of incorporating these heathen elements with Jehovah worship are seen in the denunciations of Amos, Hosea, and other prophets.

At these local sanctuaries the early Hebrews offered sacrifices as individuals, families, or clans Here they ate their joyful sacrificial meal and here they consulted the oracle of Jehovah. These feasts were often accompanied by drunkenness and debauchery From these degrading practices worship at the temple in Jerusalem was comparatively free.

deities throughout Judah was prohibited under penalty of death.

3. The Passover was kept in accordance with the Deuteronomic Law. Heretofore the Passover had been a family feast in which each household had sacrificed a lamb and eaten the sacred meal in its own home. Now all who would keep the feast must go to Jerusalem. Thus began the custom that brought hundreds of thousands of pilgrims annually to Jerusalem to keep the Passover, a practice that continued until the destruction of the city in A. D. 70.

Josiah carried out the demands of the law with great severity, and his character and personality were such that he could accomplish what a less acceptable king could not have done. It would have been impossible for him to carry out his reforms had it not been for the small size of the country. Judah at this time consisted only of Jerusalem and a small territory about the city. We are not sure how thoroughly the law was obeyed. It is always difficult to secure moral and religious reformation merely through legislation.

Josiah's tragic death.—The remainder of Josiah's reign was a time of great prosperity, happiness, and peace. He was looked back upon by future ages as a model of all a king should be. This period of happiness and progress ended all too soon, however, with the untimely death of the good king. The Assyrian empire was tottering to its fall. The king of Egypt, Necho II, therefore took the opportunity to seize the provinces nearest to him, and invaded Palestine with an army. Josiah, whose army was insignificant, but who probably relied upon Jehovah for certain victory, offered armed resistance, leading his forces in person. In the battle at Carchemish which followed, Josiah's

forces were defeated, the gallant king was killed, and his body was brought to Jerusalem for burial. The entire nation was stricken with grief for the splendid leader, so much needed, who was cut down at the early age of thirty-nine. His death had a very disastrous effect upon the religion of Israel, for his reforms had not had time to take deep root. Had he not been the best king Judah ever had? Had he not obeyed the commands of Jehovah, and walked before him in uprightness? Why had not Jehovah protected him? Was Jehovah less strong than the gods of Egypt? These questions must have been asked by many of the bewildered Israelites, and we cannot wonder that heathenism again raised its head.

Biblical Sources: The second book of Kings.

The finding of a book in the temple, *22*.
The reading of the book, *23*. 1–3.
Josiah's reforms, *23*. 4–25.
The death of Josiah, *23*. 29, 30.

Questions

1. Give the story of the finding of the Book of the Law, and of the steps taken by Josiah to win the people's obedience to it.
2. What means have we of identifying the book?
3. Mention the most important of Josiah's reforms.
4. Discuss his reign as a whole, and his character as a king.
5. How did he meet his death and at what age?
6. What effect did his death have upon religious conditions in Judah?

LESSON XXXIX

THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY

This book is pronounced by Cornill "perhaps the most significant and most momentous that ever was written."[1] The reason for its importance is that it caused the changes in religious practice described in the previous lesson. As we watch the way things are going in the reign of Manasseh, it seems inevitable that the religion of the small and unimportant Hebrew race will soon disappear, swallowed up by the heathenism of the conquerors. That it did not disappear is due to Deuteronomy.[2]

Jerusalem has been for twenty-five hundred years the most important religious shrine in the world. The hearts not only of Jews but of Christians everywhere turn to it to-day as to no other city. To the Mohammedans also it is a holy place, and they have a splendid mosque upon the site of Solomon's temple. No other city has ever been loved as Jerusalem is loved.

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *her skill.*
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,"

sang one of the psalmists. All this interest and affection is largely due to the fact that Jerusalem was made the sole place of worship in the reign of Josiah, and the love of this intensely religious race centered upon this one spot.

Soon the Hebrews were scattered all over the world,

[1] *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 90.
[2] The word "Deuteronomy" means "the second law," or "second giving of the law" (in Moab; Deut. 1. 5). The first "giving of the law" was at Sinai.

far more of them without than within Palestine. Yet wherever they were they looked toward Jerusalem, went there as often as possible to attend the great feasts, helped support the temple service with their means, and rejoiced to know that sacrifices were constantly being offered for them. This preserved their unity and kept them loyal to the religion of Jehovah, so that finally no conquering nation could absorb and no persecutions could annihilate the Hebrew race.

The purpose and date of Deuteronomy.—The intention of the writers was to recall the people to the religion of Jehovah as they believed it to have been before the corruption of the Canaanite cults. By centralizing all worship at Jerusalem, it was believed it could be controlled and purged of its heathen elements.

When and by whom was Deuteronomy written? It was written probably in the reign of Manasseh. This period was a very carnival of idolatry and immorality, and these conditions doubtless called forth the book. It was written by priests under the influence of prophetic ideas, or by prophets in cooperation with priests. Both had a share in bringing about the reforms. The book translated the moral and spiritual ideals the prophets had been preaching into terms that could be understood by the common people. It answered the question, "What doth the Lord require of thee?" It offered a definite program.

How did the book get into the temple? Nobody knows. It was probably placed there by one of its devout and patriotic writers, for safe keeping, at a time when its promulgation would have been impossible. Perhaps he hoped it would sometime be found and would bring about the very reforms that actually ensued.

Its positive teachings.—Many of the Deuteronomic laws were not new, but very old. These laws had been growing up for several hundred years, but here they are recast in a new form. Though the chief aim of the book is to put a stop to certain abuses, yet it goes much further than this and its positive teachings are remarkable for that time. Its conception of God is as lofty as any in the Old Testament.

There is but one God, supreme in majesty and might, and Israel is his chosen people. Idolatry, as unfaithfulness to him, is the most heinous sin. His love to his people has been shown throughout their history, and he demands their love in return. Their gratitude to him should express itself in kindness to their fellow men, and even to the animal creation. Generosity must be shown the fatherless, the widow, the poor, and the stranger within the gates. Servants must receive justice, the laborer must be paid his wages promptly, and slaves must be treated liberally. The law of blood-revenge is done away with and each is to be answerable only for his own deeds. The ox that treads out the corn must not be muzzled, and the mother bird must not be taken from the nest when the young are removed. When Jesus was asked which was the greatest of the commandments he quoted from the book of Deuteronomy: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind" (Luke 10. 27; see Deut. 6. 5).

The effects of Deuteronomy.—Among the good effects were these: A great decrease in heathen worship. Progress in a monotheistic and more spiritual conception of God. The unification of the Hebrew race, through the centralization of worship at Jerusalem,

and also through the recognition of the book itself as sacred and binding upon all alike. King and people had voluntarily adopted the law of the book. Deuteronomy forms the nucleus of the Old Testament and the basis of Judaism.

That there were unfortunate results no one denies. A *written* code cannot progress to keep up with changing times. The tendency to emphasize the letter rather than the spirit is inevitable. Israel finally became "the people of the book," and we can see the evil results of this very plainly in the time of Christ. Deuteronomy was the beginning of the unyielding element in Judaism. Moreover, prophecy disappeared because Israel had her authoritative book and the voice of the prophet was no longer deemed necessary.

The centralization of worship in Jerusalem too tended to rob other parts of the country of religious interests that were needed. Heretofore, a part of every animal slain had been offered to Jehovah and anyone could thus present his gift to Deity without the mediation of priests. Thenceforth offerings could be made only at Jerusalem, which meant for most families three times a year at most (the occasion of the annual feasts), and only through the priests. From this time the power of the priests steadily increased, and in later times proved a hindrance to progress.

Its authorship.—It was once believed that Deuteronomy was written by Moses, though the book itself nowhere makes that definite claim. Its very first words show that the writer is on the west side of the Jordan, while Moses delivered his message on the east side. "These are the words which Moses spake unto all Israel beyond the Jordan," etc. It was doubtless the intention of the authors to put into writing

and thus make available for the instruction of the people the message they believed Moses had delivered to the children of Israel just before they entered the Promised Land. In their intense desire for the preservation of the religion of Israel they truly believed that they represented Jehovah, and that they correctly interpreted the spirit of their great lawgiver, which they doubtless did.

We must remember there was no idea of literary ownership in those times and no conception of development. We find it difficult to understand the literary liberties taken by the ancients. The following quotation from Thucydides, the Greek historian, shows the point of view universally held: "As to the various speeches made on the eve of the war, as in its course, I have found it difficult to retain a memory of the precise words which I have heard spoken; and so it was with those who brought me reports. But I have made the persons say what it seemed to me most opportune for them to say in view of each situation; at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said."[1]

So Plato in his *Dialogues* puts into the mouth of Socrates the *ideas* of the latter, clothed often in *Plato's own words*. So all writers of antiquity were wont to do if it suited their purpose. Literary fashions have changed in two thousand years. Some people do not understand this and think that to pronounce a book not written by the person whose name it bears is accusing somebody of literary forgery.

No one can read the historical parts of the Old Testament intelligently who does not understand that many minds with many points of view contributed

[1] *The Peloponnesian War*, Book, I Section 22.

to them. Firmly believing that what God wants now he has always wanted, later writers in sympathy with Deuteronomy and accepting its standards in judging their nation's past, rewrote the book of Kings from this point of view. They believed that God had always disapproved of worship at any place but Jerusalem, hence all the kings of the northern kingdom are condemned because they worshiped at Bethel, Dan, or other northern shrines. This school of authors were writing not for historical but for religious purposes.

BIBLICAL SOURCES The book of Deuteronomy.

The Ten Commandments, 5. 7–21.
Moses's exhortations, 6. 4–25
Some humane regulations, 10. 18; 15. 7–15; 22. 8; 23. 15, 19; 24. 10–15, 17–22; 25. 4; 26. 12, 13.
Warnings and exhortations, 5. 28–33.

QUESTIONS

1. What caused Jerusalem to become th most important religious shrine in the world?
2. How did the book of Deuteronomy help to make it so?
3. So far as we know, when, by whom and for what purpose was the book written?
4. How do you think it got into the temple?
5. Mention some of the teachings of Deuteronomy.
6. Name some of the good and some of the ill effects of the book.
7. Give some of the reasons for the conclusion that it was not written by Moses.

LESSON XL

JEREMIAH, THE MARTYR PROPHET

FIVE years before the reforms of Josiah were inaugurated Jeremiah began to preach, and thenceforth for forty years he was the most prominent figure in Judah's life. We know more about him than any other prophet, for his sermons that have come down to us contain a large biographical element. He is the first of the prophets who carefully wrote out his discourses, or had them written out. His prophecy is the most reliable source we have for the period of history it covers.

Jeremiah was born during the evil reign of Manasseh, in Anathoth, a little town perched on the mountain ridge, about an hour's walk north of Jerusalem. His father was a priest, and he himself became a priest. Growing up, as he did, at the time of a great national catastrophe, his sympathy with the persecuted prophets and their teachings must have been a strong influence in shaping his character.

Jeremiah's call to be a prophet.—His prophetic work began five years before Josiah's reforms. At that time the Scythians were overrunning Europe, Judah was the vassal of Assyria, and the land was full of idolatry and immorality, the heritage of Manasseh's reign. In the first chapter of his book he gives us a wonderful picture of the inner struggle through which he passed when the "word of Jehovah" came to him and commanded him to be a prophet. He was young and diffident, shrinking from publicity,

though not lacking in zeal. "Ah, Lord Jehovah! behold, I know not how to speak; for I am a child." Jeremiah knew that if he entered upon the prophet's career, he must not only attack evils intrenched in high places but must antagonize the masses, who were under false leadership. He knew that it would mean for him a life of struggle, self-sacrifice, and persecution. Yet having put his hand to the plow he did not turn back, though the cost to him was probably greater than that paid by any other prophet.

The political situation.—We know little of Jeremiah's prophetic activity in the reign of Josiah, but the political crisis which followed that monarch's death brought him into prominence.

It was the approaching fall of the Assyrian empire that had emboldened Egypt's ruler, Necho II, to invade western Asia, where, as we have seen, he defeated his enemies in the battle of Megiddo, in which Josiah met his death. The vassalage of Assyria was now exchanged for that of Egypt. At Josiah's death the people had chosen his second son, Jehoahaz (Shallum), as king, passing over the oldest son, Eliakim, probably because of his Egyptian leanings. Jehoahaz was deposed and exiled by Necho after a reign of three months, in favor of Eliakim, who became his vassal, reigning under the name Jehoiakim. Under this unworthy king the religious abuses which had been abolished by Josiah seem to have returned in greater strength than ever. At a time when the country was impoverished by war and by the enormous tribute demanded by Egypt, Jehoiakim built himself a splendid palace. What fine courage it must have taken for a prophet to rebuke a king in words like these!

"Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unright-

eousness, and his chambers by injustice; . . . that saith, I will build me a wide house and spacious chambers and cutteth him out windows; and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion. Shalt thou reign, because thou strivest to excel in cedar? . . . Did not thy father eat and drink, and do justice and righteousness? . . . But thine eyes and thy heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for shedding innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it."

Jeremiah's sermons.—It is at this crisis that Jeremiah delivers his "temple sermons" found in the seventh and the twenty-sixth chapters of his book. Taking his stand in the temple court, he foretells the destruction of both city and temple unless the people repent and reform, and for this he comes near losing his life. Because Isaiah, more than one hundred years before, had declared that Jerusalem could not be taken by the enemy, but would be protected by Jehovah, the people believe the city safe forever. To attack this creed is treason against Jehovah. Jeremiah says they are trusting in "lying words." "Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense to Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations?"

For this sermon he is arrested and has a trial at the gate of the temple, at which his friends secure his acquittal. But he refuses to be silent. Again he stands in the temple court and repeats his denunciations. The climax of his sufferings comes when the temple overseer has him scourged and put in the stocks, to be ridiculed by the passers-by.

The rise of the Chaldeans.—A change in the political situation is brought about by the appearance on the scene of the Chaldeans, a semi-nomadic, Semitic race from eastern Arabia, who had gradually been growing in power and importance. After the destruction of Nineveh by the Chaldeans and Medes, these two races divided the former Assyrian empire between them. The Medes were a mountain people, and took the mountainous regions north and east of the Tigris River, the Chaldeans taking the territory west of the Tigris. A treaty betweem them was cemented by a marriage alliance between the two families. Under their able ruler, Nabopolassar, the Chaldeans captured the ancient city of Babylon, and founded there the new Babylonian empire.

The battle of Carchemish.—The great question now was whether the Chaldeans or the Egyptians should dominate western Asia. At the battle of Carchemish (on the Euphrates River) the Chaldean crown prince, Nebuchadrezzar, defeated Necho in 605, and thus Egyptian arms were driven from Asia. A few months afterward Nebuchadrezzar came to the throne through the death of his father.

After the battle of Carchemish, Jehoiakim hastened to transfer his allegiance from Necho to Nebuchadrezzar and for three years paid tribute to him; then he rebelled, probably trusting in the help of Egypt. At first Nebuchadrezzar merely sent predatory bands against Judah, consisting chiefly of Babylonian soldiers stationed in Syria. Jeremiah urged submission to Babylonia, and wrote a book of warning at this time, in which he hailed Nebuchadrezzar as Jehovah's servant and executive, about to punish Judah for her sins. This book or roll was brought to the king, who was

sitting in his winter house, with a fire burning before him in a brazier. When only three or four leaves had been read Jehoiakim took a knife and cut the roll and cast it into the fire "until all the roll was consumed." Jeremiah had a faithful secretary, Baruch, to whom he dictated his prophecies. At Jehovah's bidding a second roll was written, which probably is contained in our present book of Jeremiah.

The policy of submission to Babylon which Jeremiah taught was honestly considered by many unpatriotic, and as a result of it he was accused of treason. Owing to his attitude in this matter as well as to his denunciation of the moral evils of his day, he was the most unpopular man in Jerusalem, and again and again his life was in danger. He was even stoned by his fellow-townsmen in Anathoth.

In the next lesson we shall learn of Jeremiah's service to his people during the Babylonian exile, and of the tradition regarding his death as a martyr in Egypt. This, however, seems to be the best place for an appraisal of his character and lifework.

The character and work of Jeremiah.—No prophet had more profound influence upon the future development of the Hebrew religion. Of all the prophets he suffered most and he "was made perfect through suffering." It was never given him to have that appreciation of the people which eventually came to Isaiah. Though he loved peace, his life was one long battle. Of sensitive and affectionate nature, he was denied home and wife and children, for he believed that was Jehovah's will for him (16. 2). A. B. Davidson speaks of "his heroic character—all things considered the noblest in the Old Testament." He was of all the prophets the truest forerunner of Christ.

We have found that each of the great prophets built upon the work of his predecessors and added something new of his own. This is the chief reason for the remarkable advance made by the Hebrews in morality and religion. Jeremiah had a new conception of religion, that of personal fellowship with God. Before his time religion was more national than individual. As he saw the shipwreck of the state he was driven to find God within his own soul. The great truth was revealed to him that even though the temple may be destroyed, God can still be worshiped,[1] for religion has to do only with the relation of the individual soul to its Maker. Thus he spiritualized religion. He is the first who seems fully to grasp the meaning of prayer, and he has been called "the father of true prayer." His greatest direct service to his people was in helping to prepare them to withstand the shock of the destruction of the Hebrew state.

"It is an easy thing with a nation behind you to hurl defiance at the foes from without. But to stand alone, or as one of a small and persecuted minority, and to strive against the passions and vices which weaken the national character and sap the nation's strength from within—that is never easy, yet it is what the truest patriots have done. They have been mocked and spurned; they have endured persecution and imprisonment; they have met the ignoble death of traitors. But time has vindicated them, and history has honored them as the saviours of their country. Of such was Jeremiah."[2]

Habakkuk the prophet.—He was a contemporary of Jeremiah and prophesied during the reign of Jehoiakim

[1] 31. 31–34.
[2] G. W. Thorn, *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 116.

or soon afterward. He is the first of a new school among the Hebrews. Heretofore all the prophets had addressed Israel *on behalf of Jehovah.* Habakkuk addresses Jehovah *on behalf of Israel*, asking what he means by permitting so much tyranny and wrong. This is the beginning of speculation in Israel, which reached its greatest height in Job and Ecclesiastes.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's call to be a prophet, 1. 1–10.
His "temple sermons," 7 26. 1–7.
His arrest and trial, 26. 8–24.
His punishment in the stocks, 20.
His book burned by the king, 36.

QUESTIONS

1. What do we know of Jeremiah's early life? Discuss his "call."
2. Give a picture of conditions in Judah after the death of Josiah.
3. Discuss the world political situation just before the battle of Carchemish and the effects of that battle upon the world situation. Give date of the battle.
4. How were Judah's fortunes affected by the battle of Carchemish?
5. Discuss Jeremiah's work during Jehoiakim's reign.
6. What was the result of Jehoiakim's first rebellion against Nebuchadrezzar?
7. Appraise Jeremiah's character and place in Hebrew history.

LESSON XLI

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE HEBREW STATE

The same fate that had befallen Israel one hundred and fifty years before was now to overwhelm her sister state. The direct cause of the destruction of Judah was the refusal of her rulers to pay tribute to Babylon. The indirect cause was the selfishness and shortsightedness of the rulers and the corruption of the people, who blindly followed them. Against these conditions the prophets protested in vain, as they watched their beloved country rush headlong to her ruin.

The first Babylonian captivity.—As Jehoiakim still refused to pay tribute, Nebuchadrezzar came himself in 597 with a large army to capture Jerusalem. Before his arrival Jehoiakim died, leaving the throne to his son, Jehoiachin, then a youth of eighteen, who surrendered the city, apparently without bloodshed. In order to prevent further trouble, Nebuchadrezzar removed all the leaders. The king, the queen-mother, and about ten thousand of the leading men, with their wives and children, were taken to Babylon, and there Jehoiachin languished in prison for thirty-seven years. Heavy tribute was exacted. Nebuchadrezzar placed on the throne the third son of Josiah, who is henceforth known as Zedekiah, a well-meaning but weak king.

Jeremiah's attitude toward the disaster.—He has been called a prophet of evil, and most of his utterances up to this time have been harsh, but now his attitude toward the exiles is all sympathy. He sends an en-

couraging letter to them, urging them to settle down and become good citizens of the country, as they must remain there a long time. He names seventy years as the duration of the captivity, while Ezekiel says it will last forty years. As a matter of fact, it continued about sixty years for the first exiles and fifty for the second group. The error in figures made by the prophets is of no significance. The important thing is that at this crisis in the life of the nation *their faces are set forward,* and they point the race to a worthy future and a noble mission yet to be fulfilled.

Ezekiel the prophet.—Among the exiles of the first captivity was Ezekiel, whose life and work are treated in a subsequent lesson. He became the leader of the exiles—preacher, pastor, writer, organizer. There was constant communication between the exiles and the homeland. Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and all the wisest leaders of the race set themselves to prevent a recurrence of the disaster. They urge king and people not to rebel against Babylon. Even now, however, the people of Jerusalem are deluding themselves with the idea that Jehovah will interfere in some miraculous manner to save them, and the exiles are encouraging rebellion against Nebuchadrezzar.

Capture and destruction of Jerusalem.—When, in 588, Zedekiah, influenced by the nobles, joined a coalition of neighboring states against Babylon, which was instigated by the king of Egypt, Nebuchadrezzar came in person to direct the campaign. Then occurred an incident which proves to us how lacking the Hebrew leaders were in moral integrity. In order to win Jehovah's favor at this great crisis all the Hebrew slaves in the city were, by solemn covenant, given their freedom. Just then Nebuchadrezzar withdrew because of

the advance of the Egyptian army. The nobles were elated, sure that they were in Jehovah's good graces, and the *freedmen were forced back into bondage.* Jeremiah denounced this shameless procedure in such vigorous words that he was imprisoned, on the trumped up charge of treason. Released by Zedekiah, and confined to the court of the guard, he still denounced the leaders. "Then took they Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon. . . . And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire; and Jeremiah sank in the mire." From this terrible situation some of his friends rescued him, but he was kept in prison until the fall of the city. Even while in prison he was active for the good of the nation, purchasing from his cousin, at full value, the family inheritance in Anathoth, as a sign that "houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land."

Meantime Nebuchadrezzar had returned and was renewing the siege, which lasted a year and a half. The suffering from famine was indescribable, and the scenes of desolation and gloom are vividly portrayed in the book of Lamentations. Nebuchadrezzar proposed to give an object lesson that would be a warning to all subject peoples. He regarded it as unsafe that a nation which constantly allied itself with his powerful enemy, Egypt, should remain undisturbed. When the city was finally taken in 586 by means of a breach in the wall, he wrought a work of ruin that was complete. All the king's sons were put to death before his eyes, and he was then blinded and taken to Babylon. The temple was stripped of everything of value and burned. The royal palace and most of the houses were destroyed and the walls of the city broken down. All the people of the higher classes were carried off to Babylonia.

How many were thus deported we do not know. Some of the best authorities think that in the two captivities perhaps fifty thousand were transferred to Babylonia. Many at this time sought refuge in Egypt, and eventually there were more Hebrews in that country than in Palestine. Jeremiah was given his choice, to go to Babylon or to remain in Judah, and he chose to remain.

Judah a Babylonian colony.—Pitiable was the condition of the people left in Judah, who were "the poorest of the land, vinedressers and husbandmen." Over this miserable remnant Nebuchadrezzar appointed Gedaliah, who shared Jeremiah's views, as governor. After an administration of two months, which promised success, Gedaliah was assassinated by a jealous claimant for the throne. The friends of Jeremiah dreaded the vengeance of Babylon and fled to Egypt, taking the aged prophet with them in spite of his protests. "We will not dwell in this land," they said, "we will go to the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell." They settled in Tahpanhes, and the last we hear of Jeremiah he is rebuking his people for idolatry. This gives color to the tradition that the great prophet ended his life as a martyr in Egypt, being stoned to death by his own countrymen.

Of the people left in Jerusalem, many escaped into Egypt. As the walls of the city were broken down, there was no protection from their enemies. Edomites and others spread over the unclaimed land. The Hebrew nation had ceased to be, its sun apparently having set forever. If the race had been like other races, it would never have survived this catastrophe, but would have been absorbed as other races have

been, the results of its long, brave struggle for freedom and God lost to the world. But Israel was needed for the uplifting of the nations, and could not be annihilated. Thus may we see God's guiding hand in the history of the race.

BIBLICAL SOURCES:

The first Babylonian captivity, 2 Kings 24. 1–17.
Causes that led to the destruction of the Hebrew state, 2 Kings 24. 18–20; 25. 1.
The capture of Jerusalem and second captivity, 2 Kings 25.
The sufferings of the besieged city, The book of Lamentations, I, II.
Jeremiah in Egypt, Jer. 43, 44.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss fully the first Babylonian captivity: date, causes, number and position of people deported, and purpose of Nebuchadrezzar in the deportation.
2. What was Jeremiah's attitude toward the exiles?
3. Who was Zedekiah? Gedaliah?
4. Give an account of the siege and capture of Jerusalem and of the destruction of the Hebrew state; the date; the condition of the people who remained.
5. What is the last we hear of Jeremiah?

LESSON XLII

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

THE destruction of Jerusalem marks the division between Hebrew history and Jewish history. We pass from the period in which the prophets have been the dominant figures to that of priestly influence. The Hebrews were destined never again to have a government of their own save during the brief period of the Maccabees. Without political power, ruled by Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and Rome in turn, they gave all their splendid energy to religion, and became a church within an alien empire. The Babylonian exile created what is known as *Judaism*[1] in distinction from the *Religion of Israel*, which had been developed through the work of the prophets. It is important that we know what influences helped shape the race during these significant years.

The Chaldean empire.—The Jewish writers call Nebuchadrezzar and his armies "Chaldeans," yet during the past centuries of contact the Chaldeans and Babylonians had intermarried and become united through common interests. The empire is therefore sometimes called the New Babylonian. The Chaldeans had great admiration for the ancient Babylonian culture, as the Assyrians before them had. Says Goodspeed, "So deep indeed was this sentiment that the Assyrians adopted in its entirety the culture of Babylonia, its language, its art, the essentials of its religion,

[1] Henceforth the term "Jew," derived from "Judah," is the name by which the Hebrew race is usually known.

and manifested little or no desire to improve upon them."[1] He remarks also that there seems to have been a conscious effort on the part of the Chaldean leaders to return to ancient customs. It is astonishing how little the life and culture of the land we call Babylonia had changed in two thousand years. The Greek writers of a later age are the chief source of our knowledge of the Chaldean period, and unfortunately they are often inaccurate.

King Nebuchadrezzar.—Nebuchadrezzar is pronounced by Cornill[2] "the most towering personality in the whole history of the ancient Orient." He continues: "He rebuilt destroyed cities, restored ruined temples, laid out canals and ponds, regulated the course of rivers, and established harbors, so as to open safe ways and new roads for commerce and traffic. Forty-three years were allotted to him in which he reigned to the welfare of humanity." Though some historians would consider this estimate of him too high, it is important that the student should correct the view of the Jewish writers, so firmly implanted in the minds of many Bible students, that he was a monster of wickedness. In every respect he compared favorably with most monarchs of antiquity. He loved his people and considered their welfare before everything else. He was very religious (after the ideas of his times), and restored many temples of the Babylonian gods. He was a man of peace and gave his energies to the internal improvement of the country. His fortifications were on a colossal scale. There were two walls surrounding the city of Babylon and two huge trenches. Herodotus, who surely exaggerates,

[1] *A History of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, p. 327.
[2] *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 128.

says that the outer wall was over three hundred and fifty feet high and ninety feet thick, and that six chariots could drive abreast on the top of it. In spite of his inaccuracies the descriptions of Herodotus are valuable because they give us the impression of bigness and splendor which the city produced on him.

The City of Babylon.—Nebuchadrezzar says in one of his inscriptions that his "heart loved Babylon better than any other city," and his greatest ambition was to make it surpass all other cities of the world. Babylon was built on the east side of the Euphrates, and on the west side was Borsippa. In the account which Herodotus gives of Babylon he must have included Borsippa, for he describes a perfect square, about fourteen miles on each side. This has always seemed to scholars incredibly large, and recent excavations have shown that Babylon could not have been more than eleven miles in circumference. It was densely populated, the houses often being three and four stories high. There were many remarkable buildings, chief of which were the royal palace, "with many chambers and lofty towers," and the temple of Bel (or Marduk), the chief god. According to Herodotus, this temple rose from a base two hundred feet square, in terrace fashion, to a height of six hundred feet. Most wonderful of all were the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, counted one of the Seven Wonders of the World. They were beautiful pleasure grounds, built by the king to please his Median queen, who pined for her mountains. There were hills and valleys, with fountains, trees, and flowers, raised in huge terraces and supported by great arches and walls.

There were books in abundance, stored in libraries and accessible to all. Most of them were written on

clay tablets, though papyrus was used. Remains have been found of treatises on mathematics, grammar, law, government, astrology, and other subjects.

Moral and religious conditions of Babylon.—The religion of the Babylonians was the worship of the ancient gods that had been cherished through many generations by zealous priests and worshipers. The people were under priestly control and the ritual was rich and elaborate. While there is an approach to monotheism and real spirituality in some of the hymns and prayers that have come down to us, the idolatrous practices were such as to fill the Hebrews with aversion. In Babylon the debasing self-indulgence of the ancient world reached its height.

Contributions of Babylonia to civilization.—Says Rawlinson: "Hers was apparently the genius which excogitated an alphabet; worked out the simpler problems of arithmetic; invented implements for measuring the lapse of time; conceived the idea of raising enormous structures with the poorest of all materials, clay; discovered the art of polishing, boring, and engraving gems; attained to high perfection in textile fabrics; studied with success the motions of the heavenly bodies; . . . elaborated a system of law; . . . in almost every branch of science made a beginning, thus rendering it easy for other nations to proceed with the superstructure.[1]"

It is, however, the Babylon pictured by the prophets of Israel that has endured in the imagination of Christendom, as the symbol of cruelty, immorality, and frivolity, combined with a splendid material civilization. Over against these things the prophets rightly set the higher ideals of spiritual achievement. "With all her

[1] *Great Monarchies*, III, p. 75.

glory, Babylon was of the earth and is fallen; Jerusalem, which is from above, abideth forever."

Condition of the exiles.—While some of the exiles in Babylonia seem to have met with harsh treatment, on the whole they were not persecuted. Even so, however, their hearts were often sick with longing for the homeland. "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off," they cried. We must remember that all nations of antiquity believed that to be torn away from one's native soil was to be separated from one's gods—greatest of all calamities. Some of the most beautiful of the Psalms express the yearning of the exiles for the Holy City and the temple of their God:

"By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps.
For there they that led us captive required of us songs,
And they that wasted us *required of us* mirth, *saying*,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing Jehovah's song
In a foreign land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *her skill.*
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy."

The dreadful imprecation (not here quoted) in the closing lines of this otherwise noble psalm reveals the deep-seated sense of injury felt by the exiles. Most

of them were located not in Babylon but in colonies in agricultural districts. They settled down as Jeremiah had urged them to do, built houses, brought up families, and prospered as they never could have done in the barren land of Judah. Ezekiel refers to the exiles as transplanted to "a land of traffic," "a city of merchants," "in a fruitful soil." Many entered into the commercial life and became wealthy. The genius for commerce which the Jews have displayed ever since first strikingly manifested itself here. A hundred years later the Babylonian Jews were the wealthiest of their race in the world, and we find them sending gifts to their poor brethren in Jerusalem. It must not be thought that all remained true to their race and their religion. Very many were absorbed by their heathen environment. The faithful remnant, however, became the nucleus of a new and vigorous religious life.

The exiles needed consolation, and they had it. No longer did their prophets rebuke. Rather was it their mission to bind up the broken-hearted, to justify the ways of God to them, and to fill them with hope and courage for the future. The master mind of the exiles was Ezekiel, and in the next lesson we shall learn how he organized them and taught them and helped to keep the religion of Jehovah alive in them. Under his leadership they formed a miniature Judah in the midst of strangers.

Influenced by the teachings of Ezekiel and the great unknown prophet whom we call Second Isaiah, they came to believe that Jehovah had not cast them off, and that he was not powerless, but that it had been necessary for him to punish them for their sins, that he was ready to forgive them and to give them a glori-

ous future if they would obey his commandments. Thenceforth the Jews were a people on probation, and the great purpose of their lives was to please Jehovah. They set themselves scrupulously to obey his laws as contained in the book of Deuteronomy. They became a forward-looking people, conscious of a great destiny. Because of this it made no difference what happened to them; they could endure anything.

BIBLICAL SOURCES:

The exiles at Telabib, Ezek. 3. 12–27.
Jeremiah's letter to the first captives, Jer 29
A prayer to Jehovah for mercy, Lam. 5.
The longing for Jerusalem. Psa. 137. (Some have thought that Psalms 42 and 43 belong to this period.)

NOTE.—In connection with this lesson the student should read some good, brief history of Babylonia, as *Jastrow s Civi ization of Babylonia and Assyria*, or Goodspeed s *History of the Babylonians and Assyrians.*

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the character and work of Nebuchadrezzar.
2. Explain the reasons for the severe condemnation of him in the Bible. To what extent is it just?
3. Give a brief description of ancient Babylon; its fortifications; its buildings; its moral and religious conditions.
4. Give some facts regarding the life of the exiles in Babylonia.
5. What was there in the Babylonian civilization that tended to broaden the Hebrews?
6. Speak of the contributions of the Babylonians to civilization.

LESSON XLIII

EZEKIEL, THE FATHER OF JUDAISM

With the temple destroyed and the best part of Judah in exile, the problem of the Jewish leaders was how to keep the race from being absorbed by their conquerors, as Israel had been. Since the only way of worshiping Jehovah up to this time had been by bringing sacrifices to his temple, it would seem that the religion of Jehovah must perish. That it did not is due primarily to Ezekiel, who organized his people, kept them together, and found a way by which they could serve Jehovah in a land of strangers. Thus he became in a sense the founder of Judaism.

To the modern reader Ezekiel presents a less attractive personality than most of the other great prophets. He was subject to a bodily infirmity which rendered him at times dumb and incapable of action. His strange visions, influenced by Babylonian art, and his sometimes grotesque actions, seem to us to border on insanity. Yet, remarkable to say, Ezekiel's chief distinction is that he is a *practical* man, and that at the most critical time in the life of his people he had a plan which proved their salvation. He was a man of intense moral earnestness, and to this he owed his power. Generally we see only the austere side of him, but occasionally he allows us a glimpse of a very human side, as when he speaks of the death of his wife, "the desire of his eyes," and tells how, in obedience to the command of Jehovah, he restrains his tears and goes on with his teaching.

His training.—Ezekiel was a priest, and the son of a priest of the temple at Jerusalem, thus a member of the aristocratic, priestly class, and a man of broad training. He was born probably during the splendid reign of Josiah, and must often have heard Jeremiah preach. Carried to Babylon when a young man, with the "first captivity," he seems to have remained silent until five years later, when his call to be a prophet came through a remarkable vision. Like Jeremiah, he took his call most seriously, and thenceforth felt himself responsible, not only for the exiles but for every Jewish soul all over the world. As a "watchman over the house of Israel" it was his duty to warn and chide and point the better way.

His early sermons.—Up to the time Jerusalem was destroyed his message was one of reproof. No other prophet was as severe in his denunciations of the sins of his countrymen. He said their history had been one long record of apostasy, idolatry, and immorality, and that punishment must come. He feared a second rebellion on the part of Judah, and did all he could to prevent it, while at the same time trying to prepare his people for the great catastrophe which he was sure would come.

Jerusalem was seething with rebellion, and the exiles, who had free intercourse with the motherland, aided and abetted it. To reinforce his spoken and written words Ezekiel used some curious object lessons to show what the consequences of rebellion against Babylon would be. On a clay tablet such as the Babylonians used for writing, he drew a representation of Jerusalem, and without it, the tents of a besieging army, with battering ram. Dramatically he enacted the events of a siege. This was more than four years

before the actual siege. He carefully measured out rations of coarse food and a scant allowance of water, upon which he lived for days. Most dramatic of all —and Ezekiel was always dramatic—he suddenly moved all the furniture out of his house and piled it against "the wall" (evidently the wall surrounding his house), and in the night dug a hole in the wall, thrust his goods through it and carried them off as if escaping from a besieging army. These are only a few of the symbolic actions which his book records.

Ezekiel's constructive work.—After his prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem had been fulfilled the people came to have great faith in him, and he used all his influence to keep alive in them the wish and determination to return to their own land as soon as possible. They are now in a valley of dead bones, he says, but they must return to Jerusalem; their cities will be rebuilt, the soil will become fertile, barren Judah will become like the Garden of Eden, and all the people will serve Jehovah. They are to be ruled over by a prince of the house of David, but he will be rather a shepherd than a king. There will be no cruelty or injustice in the new kingdom, but everyone will be good and happy. How all these changes are to be brought about he does not tell us, but we infer, by the miraculous intervention of Jehovah, whom he represents as saying, "I will seek that which was lost, and will bring back that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick."[1]

Summary of Ezekiel's achievements.—He convinced his people that the catastrophe that had overwhelmed them was meant by Jehovah for their good;

[1] See footnote on Ezekiel, Lesson XXV.

that it was a sifting process, and that the hope of the race lay in those who should endure the test. "And I will cause you to pass under the rod.... And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me." He emphasized those religious customs which could be observed without temple or priests, especially Sabbath observance. He is called "the first pastor," for in him we find for the first time the idea of pastoral care on the part of one responsible for the moral and spiritual welfare of others. It sometimes seems as if he regarded legalism as of equal importance with morality, the *form* as of equal value with the *spirit*, yet we must remember that the times demanded a very definite religious program. The people could understand fasts, purifications, and other ceremonials better than they could the weightier matters of the spirit.

The rise of the synagogue.—Sabbath observance was one of the few ordinances that distinguished the Jews from their neighbors, and it now acquired an importance never known before. Families and communities formed the habit of gathering on the Sabbath for instruction and for the reading of the law. It is in these gatherings that we can detect the germ of the future synagogue, which originated in response to the needs of the exiles.

Results of the Babylonian captivity.—It spiritualized worship, brought about a higher idea of God, and gave a new conception of the possibilities of Israel's service to the world. It stimulated literary activity among the exiles and gave the Hebrew race a Bible. It created Judaism. It converted the Jews into a cosmopolitan people, with a genius for business and a willingness to live wherever they could prosper.

EZEKIEL, THE FATHER OF JUDAISM

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The prophecy of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel's relations with the exi es, 2; 33.
Some of his object lessons, 4.
The death of his wife, 24. 15–17.
His vision of the restored state, 36.
The valley of dry bones, 37.

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the life and personality of Ezekiel and his services to his race.

2. What change took place in his attitude toward the people after the destruction of Jerusalem? What change in their attitude toward him?

3. Give several definite results of the destruction of Jerusalem.

LESSON XLIV

LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EXILE

Some one has said, "The destruction of Jerusalem transformed the Jewish peasants into a literary race." Among the causes that brought about an extraordinary literary activity are these:

1. *The danger of absorption by their conquerors.* This danger was very real. There was at this time no wall of separation which prevented the Jews from mingling freely with the Gentiles, as there was later. The activity of the Jews in commercial life brought them constantly into contact with the native population. Moreover, the Babylonian worship offered many allurements to the less spiritually minded. The Jewish leaders realized that the best way of developing racial loyalty was through the memory of their common national experiences. Therefore they gathered together all the writings of their nation that had been preserved and carefully edited them.

2. *The necessity for communication.* Judah was so small and compact that there had been little need of writing as a means of communication. The exile had separated friends whose only hope of keeping in touch with each other was by means of the written word.

3. *The example of Babylon.* Here writing was common, especially in commercial life, where written contracts and other business documents were in constant use. The atmosphere of Babylon stimulated literary activity. There were royal libraries which possessed a literature extending over a period of three thousand years, and books were regarded with respect.

LITERARY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EXILE

Up to this time none of the Hebrew writings had been regarded as having any special authority except the book of Deuteronomy. The addresses of the prophets had not been valued, but their true worth now began to be understood. The people loved the old tales of the patriarchs, and the early stories of their race, but they were not considered sacred. Now all these stories and traditions were rewritten with deep religious purpose, as befitted the seriousness of the times. It was necessary to explain how the present calamities had come about, that a repetition of them might be avoided, and it was necessary to vindicate God.

Pre-exilic literature.—What literature did the exiles take with them to Babylon? 1. The "J" and "E" documents, which had already been combined. 2. Some ancient poetry—probably much now lost to us. 3. The addresses of the prophets—Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah, and others. 4. The narratives that are now found in Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. 5. The "Law," which consisted chiefly of the Covenant Code and Deuteronomy. This list is not complete, but it gives the principal pre-exilic writings.

Writings of the exile.—The documents "J" and "E" were edited and partly rewritten. The historical books, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, were finished practically as we have them now. The prophecy of Ezekiel was written, and probably that of Second Isaiah.

Second Isaiah.—It is believed by many scholars that chapters 40–55 of the book of Isaiah were written at this time. In all probability these chapters were copied on the same roll as the writings of Isaiah, and, being without signature, came to be considered his work. The author of these chapters has come to be known as Second Isaiah, or Deutero-Isaiah ("deutero" meaning "sec-

ond"), and he is generally thought to have written in Babylon toward the close of the exilic period.[1] Most scholars now regard Isaiah 56–66 as the work of a third and still later writer or group of writers.

The mission of the first Isaiah was to rebuke, to warn, and to try to prevent his nation from falling a prey to Assyria. At the time the second Isaiah writes, Jerusalem and the temple have long been in ruins (51. 20, 44. 26); the Jewish exiles are in despair, thinking Jehovah has forgotten them. It was not the time now to rebuke, but, rather, to comfort. If the prophets of the exile had denounced and rebuked, the race would have been crushed. The aim of the prophecy of Second Isaiah, which is intended for all scattered Jews everywhere, is to arouse and encourage them, so that when the opportunity comes they will go back and rebuild Jerusalem. He believes the time is at hand, for he sees in Cyrus, who has been making conquests in the north, the future conqueror of Babylon. Second Isaiah is often called "the prophet of consolation." He says that Israel's punishment is over; she has suffered double penalty for her guilt, but her sin is pardoned. Jehovah is about to restore and exalt his oppressed people. The first words of the prophecy have been made familiar to many through the solemnly beautiful opening strains of Händel's "Messiah," "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God."

The prophet appeals to the people in two ways. First, he draws a superlatively attractive picture of the restored Jerusalem. "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O

[1] In recent years the theory has been advanced that Isaiah 40–55 was written, not in Babylon, but in Judah; and not during the exile but within a half century after its close. For opposing views, see Kent, *Makers and Teachers of Judaism*, p. 100, and A. R. Gordon, *The Prophets of the Old Testament*, p. 256.

Jerusalem, the holy city." There will be no hunger or thirst there, nor sorrow, nor weeping. Instead there will be "a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." "The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing; and all the trees of the fields shall clap their hands." No wonder the people wanted to return!

The second appeal the prophet makes is by giving them a new conception of the reason for the sufferings through which they have passed, and a new vision of Jehovah's gracious purpose in his dealings with them. The old idea had been that all suffering was a punishment for sin. The prophet sees in it also discipline and training for high service. Through Israel all nations will come to know the true God. Jehovah will give them "for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Some of the most remarkable passages in this connection are the "suffering servant" passages (see "Biblical Sources" at close of this lesson). Who is represented by the "suffering servant"? There have been many answers to this question, and scholars are not agreed; but probably a majority to-day believe that no individual is meant, but, rather, the *Jewish race*. Through the suffering of Israel all the world shall come to know the one true God.

And let it not be forgotten or overlooked, *this very thing has come to pass*. The world has gained from the Hebrew race its highest conception of God and religion, a conception wrought out by that race through its sufferings; and in the sacrificial life and death of our Lord we see the most satisfying interpretation of the description of "the suffering servant of Jehovah."

There is nothing finer in the Old Testament than Isaiah 40–55. The sublimity of the thought with the surpassing beauty of expression have combined to make this a classic for all time. The author was a consummate artist in words as well as a noble patriot and a devout servant of his God. Yet, though in many respects he touches the high-water mark of Old Testament religion, we must not overlook his limitations. The most inspiring thing about the study of Hebrew history is the progressive revelation of God which it records. Second Isaiah's idea of God is lofty, yet he thinks of the Israelites as God's favorites, to be exalted above all other nations. Kings shall lie prostrate before them and shall lick the dust from off their feet (49. 23). All nations shall bring their treasures to Jerusalem. He would have Israel a missionary to the Gentiles, yet their presence in Zion would make it "unclean," and none shall be there. Some of the later Hebrew writers had a broader conception, but not until Christ came was the world given the real vision of a God in whose sight all souls are equally precious.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Isaiah.

Jehovah comforts his afflicted people, 40.
Israel to be a light to the Gentiles, 42. 6, 7.
The captives urged to return to Jerusalem, 52.
A summons to serve Jehovah, 55.
The "suffering servant songs," 42. 1–4; 49. 1–6; 50. 4–9; 52. 13—53. 12.

QUESTIONS

1. Give reasons for the great literary activity among the Jewish exiles.
2. What literature did they take with them into exile?
3. Enumerate the chief writings they had at the close of the period of captivity.
4. What portion of the book of Isaiah is called Second Isaiah, and why?
5. Discuss the aim of Second Isaiah, its characteristics, and the probable time and place of writing.
6. Commit to memory one of the following chapters: 40, 53, 55.

LESSON XLV

REBUILDING THE TEMPLE

A SERIES of weak monarchs followed Nebuchadrezzar, the last of whom was a quiet student, Nabonidus, whose interest was in unearthing the treasures of the past rather than in governing his country. He handed over the government of Babylonia to his son, Belshazzar, who is in the book of Daniel wrongly called the king. Before long the empire was threatened with a new race of conquerors. Cyrus, king of Anshan (a Median dependency among the mountains northeast of Babylonia), raised himself to high power in his own country, then seized the throne of Media. By a series of rapid conquests he made himself master of an enormous territory extending from the Caspian Sea to the Persian Gulf, taking the title "King of Persia." After conquering Crœsus, king of Lydia, and the Greek colonies on the Ægean Sea, he turned his attention to Babylon, supposed to be impregnable. Through the treachery of the Chaldean priests, who were angry with their monarch because of his neglect of the gods, Cyrus captured the city without a blow in B. C. 538.

The decree of Cyrus.—The fall of the Chaldean dynasty was hailed with joy by all the dependencies of the empire, even by the citizens of Babylon, and the happiness of the exiles knew no bounds. Cyrus's treatment of subject peoples proved to be the exact antithesis to that of the Assyrians and Chaldeans, for he used every means to win their loyalty, governing them through native princes and respecting their

religion. At the beginning of his reign he issued a decree allowing all deported peoples to return to their homes. He is said to have restored to the Jews the sacred temple vessels carried off by Nebuchadrezzar and to have directed them to rebuild their temple.

How many availed themselves of the privilege of returning? We do not know the number, but comparatively few. Is it not remarkable that there were any? The journey of eight hundred miles across the desert was full of dangers; Palestine was desolate; no homes would be awaiting their return; the question of securing a livelihood would be serious. Their homes and families and friends were in the land of their forced adoption, the means of livelihood there, secure. Moreover, it was almost fifty years since the beginning of the exile. How many among them had ever seen Jerusalem? Only the older ones. So the fact that only a few returned does not argue against their racial or religious loyalty. While many doubtless had been swallowed up by Babylonia, subsequent events proved that the exiles as a whole were intensely loyal. They became the richest, most intelligent, and perhaps most numerous of the Jewish centers and their gifts flowed freely to Jerusalem. The remarkable development of Judaism during the next one hundred years is due largely to them.

The first group of returning exiles.—The list of names of the first returning group given in the book of Ezra, and the number, about forty-two thousand, probably included all who returned at any time up to the period of Ezra one hundred years later, and may also include Palestinian Jews. The first band that set out from Babylon was led by Zerubbabel (thought by some to be identical with Sheshbazzar) and Joshua,

the high priest. Zerubbabel was a prince of the house of David and probably a grandson of Jehoiachin. At first all that could be done was to secure shelter and subsistence. According to the late book of Ezra, the next year they laid the foundations of the temple amidst great rejoicing. "The old men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted for joy: so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people." Work soon stopped, however, because of the opposition of the Samaritans, who took offense because they were not allowed to cooperate in the building. If this was one reason for the cessation of the work, there was another more important. The community was too poor and too disorganized and discouraged to build a temple, often suffering from famine and from the constant depredations of their hostile neighbors.

The work of Haggai and Zechariah.—To the obscure prophet Haggai great honor belongs, for it was he who aroused the people and made them see their duty of rebuilding the temple. It is the picture of a wretched community that he gives us. Crops have been poor and the little money they could obtain leaked away as if there were holes in their purses. They were not able to clothe and feed themselves properly and each was engrossed with his own affairs. "Not a stone had yet been laid upon a stone," for the temple, yet the people kept saying, "It is not the time . . . for Jehovah's house to be built." Haggai says, "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your ceiled houses, while this house lieth waste? . . . Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house."

Zechariah also urges the rebuilding of the temple, believing that it will usher in the longed-for time which the prophets have foretold. Zerubbabel shall sit upon the throne, the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing, and each man shall have his own vine and fig-tree. Urged on by these prophets, the people went to work in earnest, and in four years (520–516) the temple was completed. Though this second temple, which is often called Zerubbabel's temple, was much inferior to Solomon's, Haggai predicts that it will be greater than the latter.

The hopes of Haggai were fulfilled, though not in his day. The second temple did become far greater than the first in its spiritualization of worship, and thus in real usefulness. What became of Zerubbabel we do not know. With him disappears from Old Testament history the lineage of David. No kingdom was established, and the high hopes of the little community were dashed to the ground. The next fifty years were a period of struggle and extreme discouragement.

Importance of rebuilding the temple.—Those who rebuilt it could not possibly have foreseen the far-reaching consequences of their act. Without a definite and tangible abiding place the Jewish religion never could have continued to develop as it did. Soon the Jews are scattered all over the world, yet, wherever they are, they look toward Jerusalem and the temple, where sacrifices are being offered daily for them, and thus the race is bound together by ties that grow ever stronger.

Many of the psalms express the feelings that filled the hearts of the exiles as they saw once more the city of their dreams:

"When Jehovah brought back those that returned to Zion,
We were like unto them that dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing:
Then said they among the nations,
Jehovah hath done great things for them.
Jehovah hath done great things for us,
Whereof we are glad."

Contradictions between Ezra and contemporary writings.—Wherever there are contradictions between the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah, both of whom lived and wrote at the very time of the rebuilding of the temple, and the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, written more than two hundred years later, credence should be given to the former. Of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, this should be said: They were edited and put into their present form by the author of the book of Chronicles, in the third century B. C., and with that book, make a continuous history of Israel to the completion of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah. His sources are the books of Samuel and Kings, and certain memoirs of Ezra and of Nehemiah, which have been incorporated in his work, probably with little alteration. The interest of the author, who is usually called by scholars "the chronicler," centers in Jerusalem, and he has practically nothing to say about the northern kingdom. His aim is to exalt Jerusalem as a religious center and to glorify the kingdoms of David and Solomon. According to him, the kingdom of Judah in its greatest days was the most powerful, wealthy, and magnificent among the nations. He recounts nothing to the discredit of either David or

Solomon. He was not writing for historical but for religious purposes. In his time there was rivalry between the Jews and the Samaritans, who had built a temple on Mount Gerizim, which they claimed was the one referred to in Deuteronomy. The chronicler wishes to show the falsity of this claim, which he does by exalting the temple at Jerusalem.

Biblical Sources:

The decree of Cyrus, Ezra 1. 1–4.
The first return, Ezra 1. 5–11; 2. 1, 64–70.
Opposition to rebuilding, Ezra 4.
The rebuilding of the temple, Hag. 1; 2.
The coming prosperity of Zion, Zech. 8.
Psalms of the return, 85, 126.

Questions

1. What dates mark the beginning of the Babylonian captivity and the return?
2. Give an account of the rise of Cyrus, and discuss his policy toward subjugated peoples.
3. When and by whom was the temple rebuilt?
4. Discuss the importance of the rebuilding.
5. Contrast the second temple with the first.
6. Who was Haggai and what was his service?
7. Who was Zerubbabel?
8. What are the writings of "the chronicler" found in the Old Testament? In what century did he write?

LESSON XLVI

THE WORK OF NEHEMIAH

The commanding personality of Nehemiah is one of the most attractive in the Old Testament to those who admire courage, initiative, honest purpose, and the ability to get things done. He is a practical man of affairs, resourceful, resolute, and of untiring energy; yet he fasts and prays and reveals a peculiar devotion to his God. He has a keen sense of justice, and in him the poor and oppressed find a stalwart champion. His great service to his people was in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

The larger part of the book of Nehemiah is composed of his own account of his two visits to Jerusalem, of the rebuilding of the walls under his direction, and of his social and religious reforms. The remaining parts of the book are by the "chronicler." Nehemiah's memoirs are regarded by scholars as among the most trustworthy historical records in the Old Testament. Moreover, they are unusually interesting.

Conditions in Jerusalem.—With the completion of the temple in 516 all records of the Jerusalem community cease for fifty years. We know almost nothing of what was happening during that time except what we infer from the prophecy of Malachi, which was probably written not long before the visit of Nehemiah. From this book we learn that the conditions in Jerusalem are very bad; the priesthood is corrupt and the people are saying, "It is vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his charge, and that we

have walked mournfully before Jehovah of hosts? . . . They that work wickedness are built up." Yet there are a few who are called "the righteous," a small but earnest party, who are drawn closely together by their afflictions (Mal. 3. 16).

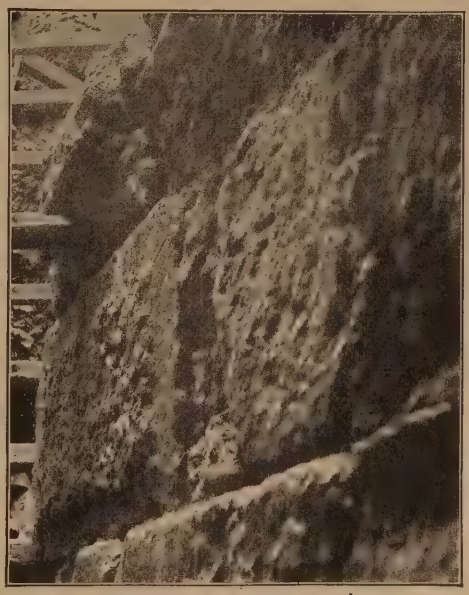
Nehemiah's difficulties.—Nehemiah was a Babylonian Jew who had risen to high place under the Persian king, Artaxerxes I. Through his brother and others who had just come from Jerusalem he heard of the wretched conditions there: that the walls were down and the people at the mercy of their enemies, that the city was sparsely inhabited, and that moral and religious conditions were deplorable. He determined to do what he could to remedy these evils. He aroused the interest of the king, and obtained leave to visit Jerusalem as governor of the province of Judah. Provided with an escort of cavalry furnished by the king to insure safe passage, and armed with royal letters and an order entitling him to supplies of timber, he made the journey to Jerusalem.

An extremely picturesque narrative is that in which he tells how he went at night to see for himself the actual conditions of the walls, no one in Jerusalem yet knowing his errand to the city.

"So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days. And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I any man what my God put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. . . . And I went out by night. . . . and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed by fire. . . . And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did." The reason for his secrecy, doubtless, was that he feared the opposition of the corrupt priestly rulers, who would be jealous of his authority. A second ob-

stacle with which Nehemiah met was the opposition of the Samaritans and the Ammonites and other neighboring tribes, who did not want Jerusalem's former strength and prestige restored.

Rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.—Nehemiah had tact as well as executive ability. He knew how to win the cooperation of the people in his plans, and he generally accomplished whatever he put his hand to. His method of dealing with the masses was to call them together and address them. His plan for rebuilding the walls soon won general acceptance.



STONE-WORK IN NEHEMIAH'S WALL
JERUSALEM

He organized the entire community, including the inhabitants of the country about Jerusalem. For the most part each was assigned work on the portion of the wall nearest his home, thus insuring a feeling of responsibility. Nehemiah himself was the general-in-chief, and his inspiring presence was the source of the wonderful spirit of cooperation. The Samaritans, under

Sanballat, and the Ammonites, under Tobiah, attempted to interfere with the work, but were unsuccessful. "We made our prayer unto God, and set a watch against them day and night." Sanballat attempted several times to entice Nehemiah out of the city, to his destruction. Then he threatened to accuse him of treason to Artaxerxes, for aiming to make himself king of Judah. But Nehemiah was too wary for him. "Should such a man as I flee?" he said, "and who is there, that, being such as I, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in."

By working night and day they finished the walls in the remarkably short space of fifty-two days, "for the people had a mind to work." "Every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other held his weapon." As there were not people enough in the city to protect it, Nehemiah selected by lot one tenth of the population outside and had them move in. The rulers of the community now began to live in Jerusalem. Since the destruction of the city in 586, Mizpeh, five miles to the northwest, had been the capital. At last, after one hundred and fifty years of desolation, the city was once more secure, and her scattered children could return to her in safety.

Nehemiah's social and religious reforms.—The governorship of Nehemiah extended from B. C. 445 to 432, but during a large part of that time he was absent from Jerusalem. The reforms spoken of in his memoirs were made during his second visit. It was fortunate that he was clothed with so much authority that he had the power to enforce his demands.

These are some of the abuses he attempted to right:

1. *Oppression of the poor.* The peasants had in many cases been obliged not only to mortgage their

fields and crops to the wealthy, but to sell their children into slavery. "And I was very angry," he says, "and I held a great assembly against them." He cited his own example in contrast to theirs. He had never taken any salary from Judah, though as governor of the province he had a right to do so. Instead he had entertained the Jewish leaders lavishly at his own expense and had lent money to the poor. "And would ye even sell your brethren?" he exclaimed. Then the nobles and the priests were ashamed and promised to give back the mortgaged property and to do in all respects as he said.

2. *Desecration of the temple.* When he returned to Jerusalem he found that Tobiah, the Ammonite, who had tried to obstruct the building of the temple, had been given a room in the temple by the high priest, to whom he was related. Nehemiah had the courage of his convictions. "And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers: and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God."

3. *Breaking the Sabbath.* Three centuries later many Jews preferred to be slaughtered rather than take up arms on the Sabbath day, but at this time it had acquired no such sacredness. Nehemiah found people working on the Sabbath, so he ordered the gates of the city closed the evening before the Sabbath and not opened until after it ended.

4. *Intermarriage with foreigners.* Though this was forbidden by the Deuteronomic law, there was great laxness in the matter. Many Jewish men were marrying foreign women, and the children often could not speak the Jewish language. Nehemiah and the Jewish

leaders of this and later times condemned the practice, for they believed it was their relations with foreign peoples that had caused the chief troubles of the nation in the past. They believed that the purity of their race and religion demanded the cessation of this practice. In breaking up the marriages that already existed much suffering must have been caused to innocent persons. Nehemiah in his reforming zeal does not hesitate to use force.

The prophecy of Malachi.—As has already been said, this prophecy comes from the discouraging and degenerate period following the rebuilding of the temple, shortly before Nehemiah restored the walls of Jerusalem. The evils which the unknown author attacks are the same as those rebuked by Nehemiah and Ezra. "Malachi" signifies "my messenger," and is not supposed by scholars to be the name of a person.

The prophecy of Obadiah.—This, the shortest book in the Old Testament, has for its subject the destruction of the Edomites, and is believed to belong to the first half of the fifth century, B. C.

BIBLICAL SOURCES: The book of Nehemiah.

Nehemiah's grief over conditions in Jerusalem, 1.
His journey to Jerusalem, and inspection of the walls, 2.
Rebuilding the walls, 3.
Opposition of enemies, 4.
Nehemiah's reforms, 5, 13.

QUESTIONS

1. Picture the conditions in Jerusalem about the middle of the fifth century B. C.
2. What were the difficulties in the way of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem?
3. Show Nehemiah's conspicuous ability in overcoming all these obstacles.
4. Give a character sketch of Nehemiah and enumerate his chief services to his people.

LESSON XLVII

EZRA'S REFORMS

Ezra was a Jewish priest of Babylon, a leading figure in the new order of scribes that had grown up among the exiles. The scribe at that time was a scholar, lawyer, preacher, and magistrate, all in one.

Moved by religious zeal, and with the purpose of making Jerusalem once more the religious center for the Jewish race, Ezra conceived the idea of going to that city with an enthusiastic band of followers, and infusing new life into the discouraged community. The account of the gathering, the caravan, and the methods of travel is of great interest. Before setting out, Ezra and his company fasted and prayed and intrusted themselves to Jehovah. Upon reaching Jerusalem they turned over to the temple authorities the valuable gifts which they had brought. The native Judæans caught the spirit of self-sacrifice and made important contributions, and a great revival of religious enthusiasm followed.

Reading the book of the law.—Ezra brought with him from Babylon a book of laws which he wished to read to the people. Accordingly, he gathered them (probably only the heads of families) about the water-gate. This was the most important eastern entrance to the city, and probably was so called because from it the road led down to Jerusalem's one perennial spring. In front of the gate was an open space where the people assembled on public occasions. It was a memorable scene that now took place, for it ushered in a new era in the religious life of Israel.

Ezra stood on a "pulpit of wood," and "opened the book in the sight of all the people; . . . and when he opened it, all the people stood up." First he gave thanks to God, "and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with the lifting up of their hands. And they bowed their heads, and worshiped Jehovah with their faces to the ground."

From early morning until midday Ezra read, "and the ears of all the people were attentive." Ezra had assistants: "And they read distinctly; and they gave the sense, so that they understood the reading." This probably means that the Hebrew was translated into Aramaic, the common language of the people.

This is a significant step in more ways than one. In pre-exilic days, when the prophets spoke, few understood their message, for the masses were very ignorant. Now an attempt was made to have *all* the people understand the Law. It was a democratic movement to which the people eagerly responded. It marked the beginning of a more general diffusion of education among the Jews. Each day for a week parts of the Law were read in the same way. Finding that they had not been keeping Jehovah's commands recorded in the new book, the people were much distressed, but Ezra wisely told them not to be troubled about the past but to begin keeping them now.

Identity of the book.—What was the book which Ezra brought from Babylon? Many scholars believe it to have been the Pentateuch, practically, though not fully, as we have it to-day. At least it included the P code (a document referred to in Lesson XLIX). From the reforms at once inaugurated parts of it can be identified.

Reforms in accordance with the new law.—

The reforms of Ezra were drastic and far-reaching. When he is told of the heathen marriages that have been entered into even by priests, he rends his garment and tears his hair and sits down confounded until the evening. Then he falls on his knees and prays, and a great crowd gathers and watches him. The people are moved to tears. One of them proposes that the foreign women and children be put away. Then Ezra makes a proclamation, calling the people together on a certain day. They come and stand in the rain while he addresses them, "trembling because of this matter, and for the great rain." A court is appointed with Ezra at its head, and this court sits for three months trying cases. One hundred and thirteen men are convicted and forced to send away their foreign wives and their children. The new law (the P code) was meant to strike at the evils of the times, and its most important provisions had to do with (1) prohibition of heathen marriages, (2) Sabbath observance, (3) the support of the temple, and (4) ceremonial cleanness. All had the same object—to make the Jews a *separate* people, and thus to prevent a recurrence of the disasters that had formerly overtaken them.

The story of Ezra has been treated here without regard to certain important questions which must be considered by any one who seeks a thorough knowledge of the period and of the work of Ezra. There is no unanimity among scholars regarding the matter, though all agree that there are troublesome problems connected with Ezra. One of them is the fact that Ezra's visit to Jerusalem is represented as having occurred thirteen years before Nehemiah's, or in B. C. 458. Many believe that Ezra's work *followed* Nehemiah's. The reasons in part are as follows:

1. Ezra's work could not have been done before the walls were rebuilt.

2. In Ezra's prayer he gives thanks that the walls of Jerusalem have been rebuilt.

3. The account of Ezra's work presupposes a large population in the city, which was sparsely inhabited in the time of Nehemiah.

4. If Ezra's work was as successful as the account represents, it is difficult to see why Nehemiah's reforms were necessary so soon afterward. The memoirs of Ezra are not regarded as possessing the authority of Nehemiah's.

"Ezra is an austere and commanding figure which has left a lasting impression upon the religious life of the Jewish people. By investing the Law with a sanctity and influence that it had never before possessed and making it the possession of the entire community, he endowed the Jewish people with a cohesive power which was proof against all attacks from without."[1]

BIBLICAL SOURCES:

Ezra comes from Babylon to Jerusalem, Ezra 7; 8.
He hears of the mixed marriages, Ezra 9.
He deals with the offenders, Ezra 10. 1–17.
He reads the new law-book to the people, Neh. 8.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the scene of the reading of the law-book by Ezra to the people.
2. What book do scholars believe this to have been?
3. What was the nature of Ezra's services to his people?
4. Can you give the approximate size of the province of Judah at this time?
5. What evidence of its small area is there in this lesson?
6. What empire ruled Judah at this period?

[1] G. H. Box, *Hastings's Bible Dictionary*, p. 253.

LESSON XLVIII

RUTH THE GLEANER

In our English Bible the book of Ruth is placed directly after Judges because it deals with the same period of history, but in the Hebrew Bible it stands in the third division, or Writings. In spirit it is utterly unlike Judges. Placed where it is in the Bible, some one has said that "it is like a pastoral symphony after a surfeit of martial music." Without doubt it is the most charming story in the Bible, "the very ideal and type of the idyl," as R. G. Moulton remarks, and Goethe has called it "the loveliest little idyl that tradition has transmitted to us."

The date of the book.—The language and point of view belong to post-exilic times and the book itself contains evidence of a late date in its references to customs obsolete at the time of writing (as 4. 7). We know nothing of the origin of the traditions upon which it is based. Though scholars are not fully agreed, many believe the book was written between B. C. 400 and 350.

Its purpose.—As we have seen, after the destruction of Jerusalem very strict laws were made by the Jewish leaders against intermarriage with foreigners, and the Moabites were one of the two nations that came under their special condemnation. "An Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of Jehovah; even to the tenth generation shall none belonging to them enter into the assembly of Jehovah forever" (Deut. 23. 3). We have learned that the

purpose of these laws was to protect the Israelites against contamination from the heathen nations about them, for they felt that such contamination had been the cause of all their troubles, culminating in the loss of political independence. The purpose of the author of Ruth seems to have been to show that not *all* foreign marriages were evil; that there were persons not of Jewish blood worthy of adoption into the nation, who could become firm adherents of Israel's faith. The story of Ruth, representing the great King David as the descendant of a Moabitess, must have done much to break down the narrow and intolerant spirit of Judaism.

The story.—Under stress of famine, Elimelech and his wife, Naomi, left their home in Bethlehem of Judah, to live in Moab, where he died. Their two sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth, but both men died childless. After Naomi had been in Moab ten years she decided to return to her own country, for she heard that the famine was over and there was plenty of bread. Her daughters-in-law started to accompany her part way on her journey, in accordance with Oriental custom. At some point in the journey she urged them to return home. "And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her."

Then said Naomi, "Behold thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law." In entering the Hebrew household of Elimelech, Orpah and Ruth had become worshipers of Jehovah. In going back to their father's home they would once more become worshipers of the god of Moab.

But Ruth refused to leave Naomi, and her noble

words beginning "Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee," have become a classic formula for the expression of the deepest and truest affection. The friendly reception with which the two met in Bethlehem shows the esteem in which Naomi had been held by her fellow townsmen. There

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

BETHLEHEM

was no means of support for the two women, however, and Ruth proposed that she should go out and glean[1] in the harvest fields, "for it was the beginning of barley harvest" (April). Ruth happened by chance to light upon the field of Boaz, a kinsman of Elimelech's and "a mighty man of wealth." From this point on we are absorbed in the story of the friendship between

[1] One of the many humane laws of the Hebrews was that which required that any sheaves overlooked by the reapers must be left "for the sojourner, for the fatherless and for the widow" (Deut. 24. 19).

Ruth and Boaz, which, with some kindly assistance on the part of Naomi, ended in marriage. A child was born to them who was named Obed. "And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became a nurse unto it. And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi." Obed was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

REAPERS

Customs revealed in the book.—Few Old Testament books give us a glimpse of so many customs of everyday life, but these did not all exist at the period of the Judges. Some of them have been projected backward from the time of the writer. Would not this have been inevitable? In many ways the story probably portrays a Palestinian village of the fifth or fourth century, B. C.

We find ourselves in a farming community near

Bethlehem during the busy harvest season. The young men are cutting the barley and binding it into sheaves while maidens glean behind them. All come together for a common meal in the middle of the day, and we learn even the kinds of food of which they partake. The marriage of Ruth to Boaz reveals the curious institution of the Levirate marriage, a very ancient custom, practiced by the Arabs, Persians, and others. According to this arrangement, if a man died childless, it was the duty of his brother to marry his widow. If children were born they were considered as belonging to the deceased. The custom seems to have arisen from the need felt for a son to maintain the sacrificial rites at his father's grave.

Of unusual interest is the account of the legal procedure at the city gate for the transfer of property. That the writer lived long after the time of which he writes is shown by his reference to "the custom of former time in Israel," of drawing off the shoe to indicate the giving up of one's rights in a piece of land. The practices regarding the redemption of property are here shown. Elimelech has a nearer relative than Boaz, who at first agrees to buy back Elimelech's land, but when he learns that if he does so he must take Ruth as his wife, he refuses, "lest I mar mine own inheritance."

The characters.—Many popular books of to-day have not a single admirable character. Here is a story in which every character is worthy of our respect and admiration. Note, for example, all the little touches that bring out the fine manliness and courtesy of Boaz. He tells Ruth he has heard of her kindness to Naomi and prays that God may bless her for it; he instructs his reapers to pull grain out of the bundles and care-

lessly scatter it for her to glean; he orders his young men not to annoy her, and he calls to the shy young stranger to come at meal time and share the bread and roasted grain and vinegar. The life of the village is simple and democratic. The wealthy Boaz greets his hired laborers with "The Lord be with you," and they answer him, "The Lord bless thee."

The beauty of the book.—Whether or not such scenes as these could have been found in Judah in the time of the Judges, doubtless they could at the time of writing. The most important thing to be remembered is that it was the religion of Jehovah that had produced the high level of morality of which we are here conscious. How simple, unassuming, and kindly the people are! What a spirit of friendliness and courtesy is revealed!

"What David and Jonathan are for men, that Ruth and Naomi are for women. Mother-in-law and daughter-in-law have ceased to be, and it is a pair of world-famous friends who descend arm in arm to Bethlehem. Instead of war, of national strife, of political struggle, we have here great harvest festivals, ceremonial transfers of land, family contingencies, such as hard times and emigration, marriage, and the strange process by which an extinct family might be restored to the genealogies of Israel. Such little things are great to the little man of everyday life."[1]

"The book of Ruth has an office in the Bible not unlike that which God has given flowers in the world of nature. It softens, it sweetens, it soothes."[2]

BIBLICAL SOURCE: The book of Ruth (entire).

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[1] R. G. Moulton, article on "Ruth," in *Women of the Bible*, p. 89.
[2] Authorship unknown.

RUTH THE GLEANER

Questions

1. Where is the scene laid as the story opens?
2. To what other place is it at once transferred, and how?
3. What previous references to Bethlehem are there in the Old Testament? (Consult a concordance.)
4. At what time of the year did Naomi and Ruth reach Bethlehem?
5. How were they received? What evidences are there that Naomi's family was one of prominence in the community?
6. Bring out the most important characteristics of the three leading characters of the story.
7. What religious conceptions are revealed that seem strange to us?
8. Mention the unusual customs referred to in the book. Commit to memory I. 16, 17.

LESSON XLIX

THE COMPLETED PENTATEUCH

The Hebrew Bible contains three groups of books known to Judaism as "The Law," "The Prophets," and "The Writings." These three divisions correspond with the three stages in the formation of the Old Testament Canon.[1] "The Law," Genesis to Deuteronomy, was canonized, or received as sacred scripture, about B. C. 400. These five books are known as the "Pentateuch" (meaning "fivefold book"). To the Pentateuch was added not later than B. C. 200 the collection known as "The Prophets," composed of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve so-called minor prophets. The third canon, "The Writings," was not completed until the first century A. D., and includes Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Lamentations, and Daniel.

In the minds of the Jews their scriptural books possessed two degrees of authority. Above all others in sacredness were the five books of the Pentateuch, because they were believed to have been written by Moses, the founder of their religion. Gradually, however, they came to ascribe sacredness to the works of the prophets. They finally admitted to their Bible all those works which they believed to have been written by inspired men.

We have had glimpses of the Pentateuchal books in

[1] Canon, literally, "measuring rod, or rule." A canon is the list of books accepted as comprising any sacred collection of writings.

the making ever since we began our study. About B. C. 400 the Pentateuch was put into circulation; that is, copies were made for various synagogues.

The "J" document.—The "J" document is the oldest writing in the Pentateuch, as has been said. Remember that there is only internal evidence for the date or authorship of any of these documents. "J" was written by a prophet (or prophets) of Judah, between B. C. 950 and 850. There are many data that point to the conclusions at which scholars have arrived, a few of which are these: The document must have been written in Judah, for the interest all centers about places in the southern kingdom, and its heroes belong to the southern tribes. It is thought to have been written by prophets, for the chief interest of the prophets always was morality, while that of the priests was ritual and the temple service. It cannot be earlier than the time of Solomon, for it presupposes a settled agricultural life and a land entirely in the control of the Hebrews. The religious conceptions point to a time a little later than Solomon. The remarkable literary skill of "J" shows that the Israelites were acquainted with the art of composition. After the conquest of Canaan was complete there were peace, more or less leisure on the part of the higher classes, and other conditions favorable to the development of literature.

The purpose of "J" is wholly ethical and religious. He tries to solve such problems as those arising from sin, sickness, and death. His style is vivid and picturesque, with intense human interest. As a story-teller he is unsurpassed. A hatred of evil, a passion for righteousness, and an attempt to grapple with moral problems are characteristic of this early docu-

ment. No other race ever produced anything at all comparable with it. Some one has said that from it "a spring bubbles up from which humanity will always be able to draw the strength of youth for its religious life."

The "E" document.—It must have been written in the northern kingdom, for its interest is chiefly in the northern sanctuaries and northern heroes. It was written by prophets, and though scholars are not agreed, most of them believe it to be about one hundred years later than "J." There is in it an advance in moral and spiritual conceptions which can hardly be accounted for except by a considerable lapse in time. When God wishes to communicate with mortals he sends an angel or a dream, instead of appearing in human form, as in "J." The moral sense is finer than in "J." For example, Abraham's treatment of Hagar is much kinder in "E," and in it Joseph's brothers are less cruel to him than in the older narrative. The denunciation of strange gods in "E" points to a date not far from that of Amos, that is, about B. C. 750.

"J" and "E" were combined into one at some time before 621, as their union is presupposed in the book of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy and "JE."—In course of time writers under the influence of Deuteronomy combined that code with "JE," and their work is known as "JED." The Deuteronomic point of view has been explained but should be reviewed here. Suffice it to say that according to that book the temple at Jerusalem is the only place where Jehovah may be legitimately worshiped. Therefore all who worshiped at other places (after the temple was built) are condemned, even though they lived before the Deuteronomic legislation was ever heard of.

The priestly element in the Pentateuch (or "P"). —Once more, about B. C. 500, a new version of history was made, by a school of priests, hence their work is called "P." From a literary standpoint "P" is less interesting than "J" or "E," more grave and formal, less human. Great emphasis is placed upon institutions and their origin, and the priesthood and temple ritual are given a predominant place. The writers conceived that they had had such a place from the time of Moses. To "P" is due the elaborate description of the tabernacle in the wilderness, which we have found to be in conflict with the earlier data.

There is one chapter in which "P" rises to a height hardly surpassed in the Old Testament. It is the matchless story of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis. The conception of God is very high. "P" could not have represented Deity as walking on the earth, talking to Adam and Eve, and partaking of food in Abraham's tent, as does "J." He is now thought of as above and apart from the earth, sending forth his edicts. "Let there be light: and there was light."

The "P" code comprises the concluding chapters of Exodus, the whole of Leviticus, and certain other portions of the Pentateuch. Its purpose was to make of the Jews a separate people, devoted to Jehovah and scrupulously keeping the Law. Of course they are forbidden to intermarry with the Gentiles; moreover, they must not eat with them nor have any kind of social intercourse with them. That these laws may be more effective, certain regulations regarding clean and unclean food must be observed. Such ritual enactments fostered the growth of the formalism and hypocrisy which were so severely condemned by Jesus. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith." The law was external. It did not appeal to man's highest nature.

The connection of Moses with the Pentateuch. —The Hebrews had no such knowledge of historical development as we have. They did not understand the changes that had come about in their racial ideals and customs as we understand them. Believing that a certain law or custom was pleasing to Jehovah, they supposed it must always have been pleasing to him, as he never changes. Moses must have known his will, and the message Moses gave his people must have been for all time. They thought the entire Pentateuch to be the work of Moses. We now understand that it represents the growth of the Hebrew ideals for five or six hundred years. Each new collection of laws grew up in response to new needs. The Pentateuch does indeed embody the spirit and teachings of Moses, but it is the work of a succession of great, inspired leaders, who understood how to take the spirit and heart of the Law as given by Moses and adapt it to the needs of the changing times.

Have we lost or gained by this conception of the way the Bible was written? The answer must be that we have gained immeasurably. The history of the Hebrew people and their religion was, according to the traditional view, perfectly unintelligible. Now we see that at each stage of the nation's life God raised up men inspired by his Spirit to interpret their past in the light of the needs of the present.

Biblical Sources:

Jacob's dream, Gen. 28. 10, 13–16, 19, by "J."
Jacob's dream, Gen. 28. 11, 12, 17, 18, 20–22, by "E."

Jacob's dream, Gen. 35. 9–13, by "P."
The tent of meeting, Exod. 33. 7–11, by "E."
The tabernacle, Exod. 35. 4–35; 40. 17–33, by "P."
Review the biblical references given in Lesson V.

Questions

1. Give the derivation and meaning of the word "Pentateuch."
2. Enumerate the documents of which the Pentateuch is composed and give a brief characterization of each.
3. What is the relation of Moses to the Pentateuch?
4. Contrast the new with the old view of the way the Bible was written.
5. Have we lost anything that is vital in giving up the older conception? What have we gained?

LESSON L

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JUDAISM

OLD TESTAMENT history ends with the account of the work of Ezra and Nehemiah. For the next two hundred years, or from about B. C. 400 to 200, we have no history of the Jewish people except from the pen of Josephus,[1] and he is often inaccurate. At the end of this long period Judaism appears full-fledged, but its process of development is at many points obscure.

Increasing power of the priesthood.—During these two hundred years prophecy practically disappeared, for its work was done. Judaism had the Book of the Law, and the living voice of the prophet was no longer needed. The priesthood acquired greater and greater authority and prestige. Having no political life of their own, the best energies of the race were expended on their church. The high priest was anointed like a king, wore the purple and a crown, and he alone could enter the Holy of holies. Under him was a graded corps of priests and Levites, several thousand in number. The chief duty of the priests was to present to Jehovah the sacrifices brought by the people. The duties of the Levites were menial—cleaning the temple, caring for the vessels and utensils, etc. There was everything to encourage corruption in the priesthood. Their income was enormous, for every Jewish family had to

[1] Flavius Josephus (A.D. 37 to about 100) was a Jew who wrote among other things *The Jewish War*, and *The Antiquities of the Jews*. Though full of inaccuracies, his works are invaluable because of the light they throw upon periods of Jewish history about which too little is known.

contribute to them a certain proportion of its income, in produce or money. Corrupt and grasping men too desired these offices. The priesthood became hereditary and the aristocratic, priestly families soon held all the positions of social influence. Nothing could have been more undemocratic. And these men had charge of the religious interests of Judaism! Two hundred years later we find high priests purchasing the office through bribery, and even in one instance committing murder in order to retain it. There must have been something tremendously vital about Judaism to withstand such conditions.

The temple service was dignified, costly, and splendid. The people loved it, took pride in it, and gladly supported it. They did not feel it to be a burden. Their love for the temple and its service is reflected in many of the psalms.

"I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go unto the house of Jehovah."

"My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of Jehovah."

"A day in thy courts is better than a thousand."

Duties of the scribes.—These were a new type of religious leaders called into existence by the need of interpreting the law, as was explained in a previous chapter. Their duty was to expound it and to apply it to the practical affairs of life. They had charge of all such matters as inheritance, marriage, and divorce. The scribes eventually became the intellectual leaders of the Jewish church. The law was regarded as author-

itative and unalterable as we regard the laws of mathematics, and the scribes aimed to have all the people understand it. They were faithful, zealous, and efficient teachers of their race during the formative period of Judaism. Later they became narrow and unprogressive.

Democracy of the synagogue.—We have seen that

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

SYNAGOGUE RUINS IN GALILEE

the synagogue grew up in Babylon to meet the needs of the exiles, who, though deprived of temple worship, could at least meet for study and instruction. But after the rebuilding of the temple the institution became firmly established in Palestine, in Egypt, and all over the world wherever there were communities of Jews. The synagogue met a need that was not met by the temple, for in it there was free discussion and constant instruction. Anyone could take part. It

is from the Jewish synagogue with its prayers and its reading and interpretation of Scripture that we get our model for the services of our Christian churches and Sunday schools to-day.

Education among the Jews.—The Hebrews easily led all the other nations of antiquity in the emphasis they placed upon the education of the young. The elementary teachers were the lowest rank in the order of scribes, called "doctors of the law," and to be found in the time of Jesus in every village in Galilee and Judæa. Some one has said, "Whoever could not read was no true Jew."

Judaism not a retrogression.—Many people think the Judaism of this period a retrogression from the religion of the prophets. This is not true. Legalism has its dangers and Judaism did not escape them. It did exalt the letter of the law, and it was narrow and exclusive. Yet this is only one side of Judaism —the *framework* which gave it body. It was the *husk* or *shell*, and the kernel which it preserved through untold dangers was the religion of the prophets. It is difficult to see how the truly moral and spiritual elements in that religion could have been preserved through the Babylonian exile and through the terrible persecutions of the Greek period had it not been for this husk. The race would have been absorbed by its conquerors, just as other subjugated races have been, if it had not been for this high wall of exclusiveness, and the coherence which came from a passionate devotion to the law. Thus the Jewish leaders, led by the spirit of God, builded better than they knew, and as the result of their work the precious kernel was protected until the time was ripe for Judaism to give way to a new and higher religion. All the best that its inspired

leaders had worked out for a thousand years it passed on to Christianity. We should never forget the debt Christianity owes to Judaism.

We get an unfavorable impression of Judaism from the scribes and Pharisees of the New Testament, and they are anything but attractive; but they were not all of Judaism. There were scattered all over Palestine and throughout the Greek-speaking Jewish communities in the time of Christ such people as Zachariah and Elisabeth, Simeon and Anna, the sons of Zebedee, and many other admirable characters of whom we read in the Gospels and in Paul's Epistles. There were no homes in the world like the best Jewish homes, simple and God-fearing. That they were so is due to the *good* side of Judaism.

Moreover, a great deal of the literature of the Old Testament which is most spiritual, with the loftiest conceptions of God and of duty, was written between B. C. 400 and 200, under the influence of Judaism. To this period belong the book of Job and most of the psalms. All these things go to disprove the common idea that Judaism was all formal and narrow.

The Messianic Hope.—This is a term that is applied to the expectations of the Jews that in time their powerful enemies would be destroyed, and that they would again have not only political freedom but a kingdom with its center at Jerusalem, which should dominate the other nations. There were varying conceptions from age to age of the nature of this kingdom and of the means by which it would be brought about. At this point it must be our endeavor to understand what the Messianic idea did in the development of Judaism in its formative stages.

We shall have more sympathy with the Jews in their

emphasis upon strict obedience to the letter of the law, and in the value they place upon things that seem to us of no importance, if we can get their point of view. The essence of it was this: they had a covenant with Jehovah, given to them through Moses at Sinai. By the terms of this covenant their race was to have a glorious future. Instead, they had lost their political independence and had been persecuted and humiliated. Why had Jehovah allowed this? The answer was clear: Because they had not kept their part of the covenant. Not for a moment did they lose their faith in Jehovah, and this was due to the teachings of their prophets, who had foretold the disasters that had come to them as punishment inflicted by a just but offended Deity. So they trusted their prophets for the future. The prophets had said that prosperity would return only by their obedience to Jehovah.

Believing that the laws of the Pentateuch were all, from the least to the greatest, of divine origin, they set themselves religiously to obey them, convinced that in so doing they were pleasing Jehovah and earning his favor. This made them a forward-looking race, with the Golden Age always ahead of them. This gave them the steadfastness with which they endured untold sufferings and unspeakably cruel persecutions. The essence of the Messianic Hope, then, was their faith in the glorious future which they believed God had in store for his chosen people.

Inconsistencies of Judaism.—If we expect to find a consistent theology in Judaism, we shall be disappointed. Their religion was full of contradictory beliefs. If we ask how it is possible to hold two beliefs that contradict each other, the answer is that many

of us do the same to-day. Professor Kent remarks: "While the Jews conceived of Jehovah as a universal God, they acted as though he were only a tribal deity, jealously guarding their race, and hostile to the rest of mankind; while they declared that he was the Creator and Ruler of the whole universe, they proclaimed that sacrifice could be presented to him only on the sacred temple mount; while they sang, 'Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering,' they devoted their best energies to keeping up an elaborate sacrificial system; while they taught that Jehovah was morally righteous and demanded the same quality in his people, they gave their chief attention to observing the often grotesque laws of ceremonialism; while they regarded him as the source alike of all good and evil, they entertained a growing belief in a personal prince of evil; . . . while they believed that God's richest blessings were moral and spiritual, the chief hopes which they cherished were that they might behold the overthrow of their foes and the establishment of a temporal kingdom in which they themselves would rule over the nations."[1]

QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the origin and development of the synagogue.
2. Contrast the synagogue with the temple and show what use each had in the religious life of the Jewish people.
3. Was Judaism a retrogression from the religion of the prophets? Give definite reasons for your answer.
4. Point out some inconsistencies in Judaism.

[1] *History of the Jewish People*, p. 266.

LESSON LI

THE CLOSING YEARS OF PERSIAN RULE

After the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem the Palestinian Jews for half a century enjoyed greater prosperity and security than at any time since before the exile. The community was reenforced by returning Jews from Egypt, Babylonia, and elsewhere, and steadily grew in strength and importance. The Persian rulers were on the whole liberal in their treatment of subject peoples until the reign of the unscrupulous Artaxerxes III, usually known as Ochus (358–337). The history of the Jews during this period is obscure, but they evidently suffered terrible persecution. It is probable that they defied the Persian power, allying themselves with Egypt, Phœnicia, and other countries. History tells of the awful vengeance wreaked by Ochus upon the Phœnicians. Thousands were slaughtered, other thousands deported, and their cities laid waste. There is no reason to doubt that the Jews suffered the same fate, though there is no biblical historian to tell the story. It is believed that certain psalms and certain passages in Isaiah and other books were written at this time, and the picture they give is a sad one. In all probability the book of Job was written during this period, with its passionate desire for an answer to the question, Why do the righteous suffer?

The Samaritan schism.—In the time of Jesus there was bitter enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans. This hatred dates back to the so-called "Samaritan schism" which began in the fifth century

and culminated when the Samaritans left Jerusalem and built a temple of their own on Mount Gerizim (near Shechem), which rivaled the temple in Jerusalem.

The causes of the beginning of the schism are told in the book of Nehemiah, in the refusal of the Jews to allow the Samaritans a share in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. The offer was apparently made

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE RUINS OF SAMARIA

in good faith, as many of the people of the northern kingdom, after the destruction of their nation, had worshiped at Jerusalem. Why did Nehemiah see fit to reject their offer? Recall that when the Assyrians in 722 carried the leading people of the northern kingdom into captivity, other people from the Assyrian empire were settled in their places. These intermarried with the native Jews, and though they adopted Je-

hovah worship, some idolatrous elements were introduced. The Samaritans outnumbered the Judæans, and we can easily understand the danger to the purity of the Jewish worship foreseen by Nehemiah if they should become a part of Judaism.

The final break, however, occurred long after the time of Nehemiah, for the Samaritans took with them

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

MOUNT GERIZIM AND THE SAMARITAN ENCAMPMENT

the completed Pentateuch, which they always regarded with as much veneration as did the Jews. According to Josephus, a member of a priestly family in the fourth century married the daughter of the Samaritan chieftain, Sanballat (whom some think to be the grandson of the Sanballat of Nehemiah's time), and for this he was expelled from Jerusalem. San-

ballat then built a temple on Mount Gerizim, of which he made his son-in-law high priest. Many in Judæa who were discontented on account of the strictness of the laws went over to the Samaritans. This separation was doubtless a good thing for Judaism, as it sifted the Jews, eliminating the less loyal. Attention has already been called to the fact that the religion of the Jews endured and steadily grew stronger partly because there were so many "siftings" of the people.

Though the temple at Mount Gerizim was long ago destroyed, the Samaritans continue to worship at Nablus (the ancient Shechem) to this day in the manner of their fathers. There is now a little band of only about one hundred of them.[1] Nothing better reveals the vitality of Judaism than the contrast between it and Samaritanism. The latter has remained stationary —a sterile religion—and has done little to enrich the world.

The Jews of the Dispersion.—Before the Babylonian exile the Hebrew people had been largely agriculturalists, but in Babylon they were introduced to commercial life, in which, as we have seen, they proved themselves most successful. Under the liberal Persian rule they scattered all over the world, everywhere becoming leaders in commercial enterprises and often acquiring great wealth. The Jews outside of Palestine came to be known as the *Diaspora*, or "Dispersion." They penetrated to Media, Persia, Cappadocia, Armenia, and the Black Sea. After the exile colonies of Jews were found in Egypt, at Memphis, Tahpanhes, and other places. Papyri recently discovered prove the existence of a large colony and a Jewish temple

[1] The National Geographic Magazine for January, 1920, contains an admirable article on the present Samaritans.

at the First Cataract in the fifth century B. C. Many emigrated to Egypt later under Alexander the Great and the Ptolemies. Shortly after the time of Christ the number of Jews in Egypt was estimated by Philo to be a million.

The Jews of the Dispersion remained loyal to their race and their religion, sending their annual contribution of half a shekel (thirty cents) for the support of the temple, and making pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the Passover and other feasts whenever possible. In the time of Christ the Jews of the Dispersion outnumbered the Palestinian Jews about three to one. On the whole they were the most intelligent and able of the race. This was partly because they had opportunity to absorb the best that other nations had to give.

Displacement of the Hebrew language.—In Palestine, Babylonia, and other parts of Asia Minor the Hebrew language gradually gave place to Aramaic, the language of Syria. By the time of Christ Hebrew was an unknown tongue to the masses. The Jews of Egypt also ceased to speak Hebrew, and instead, used Greek, which had become an almost universal language. It was to meet these new conditions that the famous translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint,[1] was made.

Influence of the Persian religion upon Judaism.—As the religion of the Jews was taking shape at a time when the most intelligent of them were in intimate contact with powerful foreign nations, it would have been strange if it had not been in some degree influenced by them. Little was adopted from the

[1] The Septuagint was so-called because of the tradition that the translation was made by seventy scholars. It originated in Alexandria, was begun early in the third century B. C., and was completed about B. C. 150. It became the Bible of the early Christian Church, to which the books of the New Testament were added in course of time.

Babylonians because the Jews were repelled by their religion. With Persia, however, it was different. The Persian religion, known as Zoroastrianism, had many features congenial to Judaism. It placed emphasis upon morality, and it forbade the use of images. It had had a long development, but had been recast in the seventh century B. C., by Zoroaster, who made it strongly moral. Its adherents had the same custom as the Jews of meeting together, reading from their sacred books, and singing hymns. Their sacred literature, however, was far inferior to that of Judaism.

The Jews were too independent and conservative to borrow consciously from the Persians or any other nation, yet the following features of Zoroastrianism appear in Judaism after the contact with Persia: 1. A belief in Satan, the supreme embodiment of evil, hostile to God and to a certain extent independent of him. 2. A belief in the resurrection. The Jews were coming to this belief anyway, as a part of their faith in the justice of God. Another life was necessary to right the inequalities of this. This included a belief in a great Judgment Day, when the dead shall rise and be judged, the good to be rewarded and the wicked to be cast into hell fire. 3. A belief in a hierarchy of angels and demons, spirits of good and evil. We find these doctrines more prominent in early Christianity than they ever became in Judaism.

The book of Joel.—Joel was formerly supposed to be one of the earliest of the prophetic books, perhaps preceding Amos, but scholars now believe it to belong to the first half of the fourth century (Persian period). A great calamity has befallen the land in the form of a scourge of locusts. Joel sees in this the impending "Day of Jehovah," and calls on the people to repent

in fasting and prayer. Note especially 2. 1–14, 28; 3. 10.

Questions

1. Discuss the Samaritan schism, with causes and results. In what ways was it a good thing for Judaism?
2. What is meant by "the Dispersion"?
3. What were the three chief centers of Judaism during the Persian period?
4. What language displaced Hebrew as the vernacular of the Jews in Palestine?
5. What was the Septuagint? Its approximate date?
6. Discuss the influence of the Persian religion upon Judaism.

LESSON LII

JONAH THE MISSIONARY

Dwelling constantly on the glorious future that awaited them and the destruction in store for their enemies bred narrowness and intolerance in the Jews. Occasionally a writer appears, however, who rises above this spirit and shows a broad, tolerant attitude toward the Gentiles. Chief among these writers is the author of the little book of Jonah. The book is not strictly a prophetic book, though classed with the minor prophets, for the title names not the author but the hero of the book.

Date and authorship of the book.—Jonah, according to 2 Kings 14. 25, lived during the reign of Jeroboam II (785–745), and was therefore a contemporary of Amos. We know nothing about him except the verse referred to above, which says little more than that he was a prophet and the son of Amittai. It will be recalled that the Assyrian empire was at its height in the time of Jeroboam II, and that Nineveh was its capital city.

The book of Jonah was written by an unknown author about B. C. 300, evidently for the purpose of rebuking the narrowness and intolerance of Judaism. It would probably have surprised the author to know that in course of time his work would be interpreted literally by many people. Professor A. R. Gordon says of it: "The book is really an example of the Midrash —moral apologue or parable—which was so much used by the Jewish teachers and notably by our Lord, to

illustrate or enforce spiritual truth. As literature it stands in exactly the same category as the parable of the sower, and that of the prodigal son. Jonah is the typical Israelite of his day, jealous of his spiritual prerogative, and eager for the annihilation of the heathen nations, rather than their reception into the Kingdom. The object of the book is to bring the people to a better mind: to make them realize their responsibilities to the world lying around them in darkness, and to inspire them with something of God's passion for humanity."[1] May we not be glad that the Bible contains not only fact but fancy, not only history and law, but work of the creative imagination?

The story of Jonah.—It is an exceedingly interesting one. Jehovah directs Jonah the prophet to go and preach to the people of Nineveh because of their wickedness, but Jonah is unwilling to go because he fears that the Ninevites will repent and be forgiven. "For I know that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness." So, thinking to escape his unwelcome task, Jonah goes to Joppa and takes ship for Tarshish, on the coast of Spain. A great storm arises and all the people on the ship call on their various gods to save them. As this does not serve to allay the storm they cast lots to find out whose god is angry, and the lot falls upon Jonah. Then he confesses that he is "fleeing from the presence of Jehovah." The cause of the storm now being understood, they regretfully cast Jonah overboard. He accepts his fate manfully—indeed, it is he who suggests this solution of the difficulty, "for I know it is for my sake that this great tempest is upon you." At once "the sea ceased her raging."

[1] *The Prophets of the Old Testament*, p. 348.

"And Jehovah prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." At the end of that time he was cast forth on dry land. But Jonah could not escape from his God. A second time Jehovah told him to go and preach to the Ninevites. This time he went, but most unwillingly. It was just as he feared it would be. As soon as he began to preach the people began to repent and to worship Jehovah, "from the greatest of them even to the least of them." "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil which he said he would do unto them; and he did it not."

This made Jonah very angry. He found fault with Jehovah and prayed that he might die. "Then Jonah went out of the city, . . . and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city." (He still hoped it would be destroyed.)

"And Jehovah God prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to deliver him from his evil case. So Jonah was exceeding glad because of the gourd." But the gourd vine died as quickly as it had sprung up, "and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and requested for himself that he might die." A sorry figure he cuts, sulking in his booth.

The lesson of the book.—The lesson which the author intended to teach is found in the closing verses, in which Jehovah says to Jonah,

"Thou hast had regard for the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: and should not I have regard for Nineveh, . . . wherein are more

than six score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?"

Of course Jonah represents Israel. The race has been called to be Jehovah's prophet to the nations, but has been blind to her great opportunity. It is wonderful that a Jewish writer so long before Christ should exhibit so truly Christian a spirit, and that he should have so noble a conception of God. To him God is no respecter of persons, but the universal Father of mankind, whose love extends far beyond the Jewish race. The Jews had thought themselves the only objects of God's care, and some of their prophets had wished to see the Gentiles destroyed. The book of Esther, by an unknown writer of the next century, voices that spirit. The author of the book of Jonah enforces his lesson by caricaturing the narrow-minded Jew and holding him up to ridicule. One writer remarks, "The normally minded men in every age laugh at it, as the author intended."

These are some of the reasons why we may know that the book could not have been written in the time of Jonah:

1. It contains Hebrew words and constructions found only in the later biblical books.

2. Nineveh no longer exists (3. 3).

3. The questions with which the book deals did not arise until about the fourth century B. C.

It is clear that the author did not intend the book to be regarded as historical from the freedom with which he introduces the grotesquely supernatural: the sudden appearance and disappearance of the tempest, the choice of Jonah by lot, the preservation of Jonah within the fish (we even have the prayer he offers

while inside of it!), the miraculous growth and sudden death of the gourd, the swift and complete conversion of the Ninevites. The book, then, is a parable or apologue.

Says Cornill: "Wherever shallow humor prompts people to hold the Old Testament up to ridicule, Balaam's ass and Jonah's whale infallibly take precedence. . . . This apparently trivial book is one of the deepest and grandest ever written."[1]

BIBLICAL SOURCE: The book of Jonah (entire).

QUESTIONS

1. Why was Nineveh selected as the city to which Jonah was sent?
2. What do you know of Nineveh? The date of its fall?
3. What prophet wrote a poem upon the fall of Nineveh?
4. What contrast does the author of the book of Jonah bring out between Jonah and the heathen sailors?
5. What is the purpose of the gourd in the story?
6. What did the author think to be the relation between ignorance and sin (4. 11)?
7. Give the approximate date and the probable purpose of the book of Jonah.

[1] *The Prophets of Israel*, p. 170.

LESSON LIII

PALESTINE UNDER THE GREEKS

In B. C. 332 the decadent and unwieldy Persian empire, now hated by the Jews, fell before Alexander, son of King Philip of Macedon, and for the next two centuries Palestine was under Greek domination. Alexander was only twenty years old when he appeared in the rôle of world-conqueror, and is one of the most marvelous figures of history. After succeeding his father on the Macedonian throne he turned his attention to Asia Minor, and won a sweeping victory over Darius, the emperor of Persia, at Issus. Next he swept like a whirlwind down the Mediterranean coast, conquering all before him. The most serious opposition with which he met was from Tyre, which was forced to capitulate after a heroic defense of seven months. Two thousand of its inhabitants were hanged upon its walls and thirty thousand sold into slavery. Jerusalem, seeing the folly of resistance, surrendered without a struggle.

Within the next few years Alexander conquered Egypt, Damascus, Babylon, and the remainder of the old Persian empire, and pressed still onward, making conquests as far as India. Within ten years the young genius had become practically the master of the known world, and "sighed for more worlds to conquer." But in 323, while in Babylon, making plans for the reorganization of his empire, he suddenly died.

Ambitions of Alexander the Great.—His most striking characteristic was his passionate devotion

to Greek culture and his determination to extend it as far as possible. He dreamed of a world permeated by Greek influence, and set himself the task of creating such a world. He was a Macedonian, it will be remembered, but his education was Greek. He had had as a tutor the great philosopher Aristotle, who in turn had been the pupil of Plato. To the teachings of Aristotle is probably due in large measure Alexander's unbounded admiration for the masterpieces of Greek literature and art, and all else that we include under the term "Greek culture." Through the same teaching the young man's imagination had been kindled and his whole personality imbued with the splendor of the Greek genius.

The planting of Greek cities.—As the most effective way of carrying out these ambitious plans, Alexander built Greek cities in every country conquered; and all the cities captured were reorganized on a Greek basis. To these cities were brought Greek colonists, traders, artisans, artists, philosophers—all classes. The result was a remarkable transformation in the life of the Asiatic peoples, most of whom accepted Greek culture willingly. There was one race, and one only, that did not accept it—the Jews. This led to a titanic struggle between Greek and Jew.

Alexandria founded.—The most important constructive work of Alexander the Great was the building of Alexandria, in northern Egypt. The city has a remarkable location, situated on the Mediterranean Sea and commanding the commerce of three continents. Built at royal expense, it was one of the most beautiful cities of antiquity. It had three separate quarters, Greek, Egyptian, and Jewish, and it eventually became the second greatest Jewish center in the world.

The rise of Hellenism.—From time immemorial the Syrian group of peoples had been ruled by one alien power after another, but the old ways of life had gone on much the same. They had paid their tribute and had furnished their quota of soldiers for the king's armies, the two things absolutely demanded of them, and their attitude toward all their conquerors had been alike antagonistic. But now they came under the rule of a nation that was to change all things, and in a very subtle way, through the introduction of new ideas. These ideas emanated from a people who called themselves Hellenes (from *Hellas*, the ancient name of Greece). They lived for the most part in little separate states, each consisting of a city and the outlying territory (see a map of Greece of about B. C. 300). Among these people there had for many years been growing up certain new conceptions unlike anything the world had known before, regarding politics, government, philosophy, science and art; in short, a new way of looking at life.

In Lesson I it was stated that two streams of influence have molded modern civilization, the Hebrew and the Greek. We are now to see these two streams come together.

Successors of Alexander.—The death of Alexander left no heir to the throne, and there was a general scramble for it on the part of his generals. It would be an unprofitable task to attempt to follow the fighting of these generals; suffice it to say that thirty years after Alexander's death five of the generals were still in the field. Thirty years later there were three kingdoms, ruled by descendants of three of the five. The kingdoms were (1) the Macedonian, (2) that of the Seleucidæ, and (3) the Ptolemaic. The first does not

here concern us; both of the others do because of their relation to their Jewish subjects.

The Ptolemaic kingdom.—At the time of Alexander's death, Ptolemy, one of his generals, was governor of Egypt, and he not only maintained his hold while the fighting was going on, but his descendants held the throne for three hundred years, Cleopatra, in the time of Julius Cæsar, being the last. The kings of this dynasty are called by the name of the founder, Ptolemy.

The kingdom of the Seleucidæ.—Seleucus, who outlived all the rest of Alexander's generals, was assassinated fifty-three years after Alexander's death. It was he who founded the Seleucid dynasty. The rulers of this house did not use a single name, but are almost all called either Seleucus or Antiochus. At first their dominions included all the Asiatic part of Alexander's empire, but being too unwieldy, they fell apart, little by little. There were several capitals in different parts of the empire, that in Syria being Antioch, built by Seleucus, the founder of the dynasty. The Seleucidæ are often spoken of as Syrians. They were Macedonians, but Greek in education and sympathies. So the Ptolemies should not be thought of as Egyptians, but as Macedonians or Greeks. There was little sympathy in either country between the rulers and the people.

Palestine a bone of contention.—To which should Palestine belong? That was the question. The possession of it was of great importance, for the country controlled valuable trade routes between Egypt and Syria, it paid heavy tribute, and it was the gateway of Egypt. So it was a shuttle-cock between the two nations, belonging first to one and then the other,

until B. C. 301, when it passed into the control of the Ptolemies, to remain there one hundred years. This century was a period of prosperity and happiness for the Jewish people, and the wars which continued between the Seleucids and the Ptolemies did not affect them much.

In B. C. 223, one hundred years after the death of Alexander, there came to the throne of Syria Antiochus, afterward called the Great, under whose vigorous rule Palestine in B. C. 198 passed finally from the Ptolemies to the Seleucidæ. Any change, apparently, was welcome to the Jews, and they received the new regime gladly. Josephus says, though the truth of his statement has been questioned, that Antiochus was received at Jerusalem by a festal procession of the citizens, and given certain honors. They little thought how soon, through a member of this same dynasty, they would be called upon to endure persecution far more terrible than any their long-suffering race had yet known.

QUESTIONS

1. Describe the rise to world power of Alexander the Great.
2. What was his policy toward conquered countries?
3. Contrast him in this respect with previous conquerors of Asiatic states.
4. Discuss his aims and methods.
5. What great city did he found?
6. In brief, what is meant by "Hellenism"? What three kingdoms fell heir to the dominions of Alexander?
7. Who were the Ptolemies, and when was Palestine under their rule?
8. When and how did Palestine pass to the Seleucidæ?

LESSON LIV

THE STRUGGLE WITH HELLENISM

HELLENISM came near doing what the Babylonian and Persian armies had not been able to do—strangling Judaism. For two hundred years after the time of Alexander the Great these two mighty forces grappled with each other. If Judaism had been crushed we should not have to-day even as good a world as we have. All the other conquered peoples accepted the Greek culture, even the Samaritans; and the ancient cities, like Tyre and Sidon, Gaza, Askelon and Damascus, became flourishing centers of Hellenism.

Both Judaism and Hellenism were essential to the world, and each needed something the other could give, but neither knew it. Hellenism, born in cities, looked down upon Judaism as crude, provincial, narrow. The Greek could not understand the Jew's strict morality, his simple domestic joys, his devotion to temple and synagogue. The Jew's hatred of immorality led him to look with suspicion upon the games and athletic contests, and the sensual life that centered around the gymnasium. His abhorrence of idolatry led him to reject all forms of art. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image," must be literally obeyed.

A Greek city.—When we realize just what a Greek city was we can understand with what abhorrence the orthodox Jew regarded it, and we can see what enticements it offered to the young people growing up in his home; for to the outward view Hellenism was all brightness, warmth, and color. Judaism

was lacking in just these elements, things which young people in all ages and climes have craved. All Greek cities were alike in certain respects. All were beautiful to look upon, with imposing buildings, Greek temples, halls and colonnades, fine streets, and statuary. The Jewish city was lacking in beauty, as all Oriental

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

JERASH—GRÆCO-ROMAN REMAINS

Jerash (modern Gerasa) lay east of the Jordan in the region later known as the Decapolis. Jerash appears to have been ruined by an earthquake. Barton, in *Archæology and the Bible*, p. 217, says: "The writer has never seen more beautiful ruins than those at Jerash except the ruins at Athens. As one approached the site from the south he faced a beautiful arched gateway. After passing this gateway one looked northward down a long colonnaded street, which at a little distance from the gate broadened out into a circular forum. . . . The remains of two imposing temples, of two theaters, of a large Christian basilica, and of various other buildings, impress one with the former glory of the city."

cities are to-day. The Greek city was a municipality, where every free citizen had a vote; it had a senate, and magistrates, elected by the citizens. The Jewish city had an autocratic government, and its inhabitants had little contact with politics or world affairs.

It cannot be denied that their life was narrow, lacking in many-sided interests.

A typical Greek city had an *agora*, or market place, which was the business and social center of the city; *stoas*, covered, colonnaded walks where men could lounge in the shade and discuss affairs of the day; public baths, a stadium for athletic contests, a hippodrome for chariot racing, and a gymnasium which not only served for physical training but was a social center for the young men. Attached to the gymnasium were guilds of youths, who had a distinctive uniform consisting of a broad-brimmed hat and a cloak brooched about the shoulders. They made an imposing appearance as they marched in great processions on a festal day. There were theaters, and though many of the plays were far from elevating, the works of the great Greek dramatists never seem to have gone out of fashion.

The menace of Hellenism.—The Greek language became the language of educated people, and all the wealth of Greek literature was opened up to the Orient. Hellenism was fashionable, and perhaps nothing is so potent as fashion. Nothing was more natural than that young Jews should want a share in all this fascinating life, which must have seemed to them so much richer than that of their own people. They wished to enter the athletic contests and other sports, and to avail themselves of the many opportunities for broadening themselves. A motive that appealed to the ambitious was that the only way to large worldly success was through the favor of the ruling race. But those who ventured even a little way were usually swallowed up by Hellenism.

Why Judaism hated Hellenism.—First of all,

the Jews objected to it because of their reverence for their law, with which it came in conflict. Ever since the days of Ezra their main concern in life had been the scrupulous observance of the law, and this involved complete separation from everything that was heathen. But their hatred of Hellenism rested on other grounds as well. The deep religious seriousness of the Jew could not tolerate the frivolity and skepticism which were characteristic of Hellenism. The Greeks had at this time left their Golden Age far behind them and were in a condition of moral decay—the inevitable result of a civilization that does not rest upon sure moral and religious foundations. It has been said that "the Greeks became for the Orient the bearers of civilization indeed, but also the bearers of moral degeneration. Where they really predominated arose frivolity and skepticism and a moral laxity more repulsive under its varnish of culture than undisguised barbarism and untutored license."[1]

If the Greeks could have had all those things which contributed to the joy and richness of life without losing moral fiber, all would have been well. But it has never happened since the world began that a people has unduly exalted luxury, ease, and the pleasures of the senses, without a corresponding loss in the things of the Spirit. While slaves did the work of the world these Greek gentlemen "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing." As to the fashionable Greek women, the glimpses we have of them indicate that they found their chief interest in gossip and a round of frivolity.

If we were here attempting to make an exhaustive study of Greek civilization and of its contribution to

[1] Carl Cornill, *History of the People of Israel*, p. 179.

the world, it would be unfair not to dwell upon the marvelous achievements of the race in art, literature, philosophy, and science. Had the Hebrew race been depended on for these elements in our civilization, we should still be living in a world devoid of richness and beauty. The subject we are considering here, however, is the menace of Hellenism to Judaism.

Apostasy among the Jews.—When we say that Judaism successfully resisted Hellenism, important reservations must be made. Many Jews did not resist it and were lost to the race. By B. C. 200 apostasy among the Jews had reached serious proportions. Thousands had adopted Greek dress, Greek customs and manners, and in many cases had taken Greek names. The undermining of the austere old ideals of the race took place especially in the cities and among the higher classes, the aristocracy. Unfortunately, the aristocracy were the hereditary priestly families, the guardians of religion!

We do not know what would have happened if things had continued to go on smoothly. So far had the apostasy gone that it seems more than likely that Judaism would have been absorbed and have quietly disappeared from the face of the earth, leaving no trace, had not the race once more been put through a crucible of fire, and tested and sifted. That monster of cruel intolerance, Antiochus Epiphanes, saved the day for Judaism by his unspeakable persecutions. These persecutions brought on the Maccabæan wars, which will be treated in a later lesson.

SOURCES: An admirable discussion of Judaism versus Hellenism can be found in Edwyn Bevan's *Jerusalem under the High Priests.*

QUESTIONS

1. Give a description of a typical Greek city.
2. Write a paper in which you enumerate the strong points and the weak points of both Hellenism and Judaism.

LESSON LV

THE AWAKENING OF JUDAISM

The accession of Antiochus IV in B. C. 175 brought matters to a crisis. As Antiochus was a puzzle to his contemporaries, so he has continued to be to historians. He had a childish love of pomp and power, and his conduct was often grotesque, yet he was a man of practical ability and very successful in military operations. He assumed a frank and spontaneous manner, and an open-handed liberality, yet he was very subtle, a finished diplomat. His self-conceit was without bounds.

His youth was spent in Rome as a hostage. It goes without saying that he was dissolute, and there probably was within him a vein of insanity. Popular witticism changed his name, "Epiphanes" (meaning "God manifest"), to "Epimanes" ("madman"). Utterly lacking in self-control and unused to being crossed, he stopped at nothing in accomplishing his desires.

The Hellenistic Jews welcomed the rule of Antiochus, for now they would be in high favor. And so it proved. Omias III, the good high priest, was deposed, and his brother Jason, the leader of the Hellenistic party, got himself appointed to the office through bribing Antiochus. Jason remodeled Jerusalem on Hellenic lines and as the best method of attracting Jewish youth, erected a splendid gymnasium, to which the young men of the Jewish aristocracy flocked. It was not long before Jason was superseded by Menelaus, who offered Antiochus a larger bribe, and after his appointment even robbed the temple treasury to pay his debt.

Intense was the indignation of the faithful at this outrage, and because of their protest, Omias was put to death. The Hellenist party had now gone too far.

The Hasidæans.—There had gradually grown up a party of resistance to Hellenistic Judaism who called themselves *Hasidim* ("the pious"), and who were the stern Puritans of Judaism. They were composed largely of the poorer people and were forerunners of the Pharisees. This party was filled with intense hatred for Antiochus and all his works. When a report came that he had been killed while campaigning in Egypt, this hatred culminated in open expression. They rose in their might and put to death the leaders of the Hellenistic party.

Persecutions by Antiochus.—But Antiochus was not dead. Returning in angry mood from an expedition against Egypt which had been defeated by the interference of Rome, he turned aside to repress the disorders in Judæa, which he called defiance of his authority. He insolently entered the temple and plundered it, carrying off its precious treasures to Antioch. He turned the city over to his soldiers to loot and murder. No mercy was shown to women and children. Many Jews were sold into slavery. There was no redress against this tyrant, but he had not yet done his worst.

Two years later, in 168, he sent an agent with an army to Jerusalem with the definite purpose of eradicating Judaism. In this he was encouraged by the Hellenistic Jewish party. The persecutions he then began remain to this day perhaps the most cruel religious persecutions in history.

He had acquired an extraordinary antipathy to the Jews because, in his attempt to Hellenize his em-

pire, they were the one obstacle. He issued certain decrees that he thought would accomplish his end. Sabbath observance, circumcision, and the possession of any portion of the Hebrew Scriptures were forbidden under penalty of death. The army, professing peace, waited until the Sabbath day, then fell upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who would not take up arms on their sacred day, even in self-defense. Thousands were slaughtered and thousands sold into slavery; the walls of the city were torn down; the citadel, Acra, overlooking the temple, was garrisoned with Syrian and apostate Jewish soldiers. The temple was dismantled and in place of the great altar of Jehovah was set up an altar and statue to Zeus—the "abomination of desolation" of the book of Daniel. On this altar the people were commanded to sacrifice swine's flesh, and refusal to do so meant death. The precincts of the temple were defiled by the immoral practices of heathendom which the prophets had denounced hundreds of years before. The decrees mentioned above were issued to every town and village in all Judæa, and soldiers were sent to enforce them.

The Jewish martyrs.—Many escaped and concealed themselves in caves and mountain fastnesses, and many, terrified, yielded to the demands of their persecutors. Few people have ever been called upon to have their religious faith put to so severe a trial. If a similar test should come to any Christian land to-day, are we sure that it would be met as gloriously as these Jews met it? To the honor of the human race let it be said that there were not lacking those who counted their lives nothing in comparison with what they believed to be right, and who nobly died the death of martyrs. These were the first martyrs for their re-

ligious faith in the history of the world, though since then the roll has grown very long. It was chiefly the Hasidæans who furnished these martyrs.

The book of Daniel.—Of unspeakable value to these sufferers was the book of Daniel, which was written at this time by some unknown author, for the purpose of encouraging them and enabling them to hold out against their tormentors. He did this by telling the stories of Daniel and other young Hebrews who, at the time of the Babylonian captivity, were placed in a somewhat similar position. They refused all inducements to eat unclean food, and for refusing to worship an image set up by the king, Daniel's three friends were cast into a fiery furnace. For insisting upon worshiping his God Daniel was thrown into a lions' den. Yet they all came through the ordeal unharmed and Daniel was promoted to place and power.

The latter part of the book consists of a series of visions in which the faithful could see the downfall of Antiochus, and Judaism triumphant. The author tries to vindicate the moral order of the world and to show that God is not unmindful of the sufferings of the faithful. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever."

We find the latter part of the book of Daniel mysterious and difficult to understand. The reason is clear. It would not do for the author to say plainly all he wanted to say about Antiochus and the destruction surely in wait for him and his kingdom, so he said these things darkly, under the guise of symbols.

The people for whom he wrote had no difficulty in understanding him.

Apocalyptical literature.—The book of Daniel is the best type of a kind of literature called apocalyptic, which afterward became very common in Judaism. Apocalypse has been defined as "a looking forward to the achievement of God's purposes by his sudden, supernatural intervention." An apocalypse (the word means "unveiling") makes plain things usually hidden from human eyes. The Jewish people were in despair of ever freeing themselves from the rule of their conquerors by the sword. The apocalyptists taught that God would intervene miraculously to destroy their enemies and establish them in a kingdom of their own. They saw God in history and believed that all things were working together for the final good of the Jewish people. The result of this teaching was to intensify the faith of the people in God and in his justice.

Other literature of the period.—Though the Old Testament contains no history of this period, the bitter trials through which the Jews were passing are voiced in some of the apocryphal books and in some of the Psalms. Many believe the psalms given in the references at the close of this lesson to be a product of this time.

The term "apocrypha" is applied to a body of Jewish literature that has come down to us in close connection with the canonical books of the Bible and yet is not of them. The apocryphal books were accepted by the Jews of Alexandria and included in the Septuagint, but were never accepted by the Jewish scholars who finally fixed the Hebrew canon. The names of these books may be found in any dictionary.

The Protestant Church, following the Hebrew Bible, excludes them, but they are found in the Vulgate Bible, used in the Roman Catholic Church. Among the most important are, in addition to 1 and 2 Maccabees, Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon.

The book of Esther probably was written between B. C. 200 and 150, by a Jew of the Dispersion, and his purpose was to inspire in his countrymen greater loyalty to the Jewish race and religion. The Jews of the story are living in the midst of hostile races who are seeking to destroy them and whom they hate intensely. The spirit of animosity and revenge which the book breathes forth can be understood in the light of the times, but prevents it from finding much favor with the Christian Church. At the time the book was written the Great Teacher had not given the world the precept, "Love your enemies," which, though far from being practiced by the majority of his followers to-day, is admitted to be their ideal.

SOURCES:

Causes that led to the Maccabæan war, Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 1.
The persecutions of Antiochus, 1 Macc. 1; 2 Macc. 7.
Encouragement to the victims of the persecutions, Dan. 1, 3, 6.
Songs of sorrow, Psalms 44, 74, 79, and 83.

QUESTIONS

1. State clearly the causes that led to the Maccabæan wars.
2. Mention some events that show to what depths the high-priesthood had fallen.
3. What was the party of resistance to Hellenism, and how composed?
4. What is the derivation and meaning of the word "apocalypse"?
5. What characteristics do apocalyptic writings possess in common?
6. What is the "apocrypha"? Name everal apocryphal books.

LESSON LVI

THE MACCABÆAN WARS

THE persecutions of Antiochus had awakened a slumbering giant. There were some things which this long-suffering race would not stand. The flag of revolt against Antiochus was raised by a family commonly known as the Maccabees, and this family furnished the leaders in the wars which followed as well as in the state formed afterward. The apocryphal books, First and Second Maccabees, are our best source for the history of the Maccabæan wars, though written at a slightly later period. These books are not parts of the same work, as are First and Second Kings, but are by different authors. First Maccabees is a work of great value and of high authority. Second Maccabees is of less value. Luther said that First Maccabees should be in the Old Testament canon and many think the same to-day.

The uprising of the Jews.—The little village of Modein, situated twenty miles from Jerusalem on the road to Joppa, made itself forever known through the deeds of some of its brave sons. Here dwelt an aged priest by the name of Mattathias. When the king's officers came to Modein they at once sought him out, saying, "Thou art a ruler, and an honorable and great man in this city, and strengthened with sons and brethren: now therefore come thou first, and fulfill the king's commandment, like as all the heathen have done, yea, and the men of Judah also, and such as remain at Jerusalem. So shalt thou and thy house

be in the number of the King's Friends, and thou and thy children shall be honored with silver and gold, and many rewards." "Then Mattathias spake with a loud voice, Though all the nations that are under the king's dominion obey him, and fall away every one from the religion of their fathers, . . . yet will I and my sons and my brethren walk in the covenant of our fathers."[1]

Just then a Jew came up to sacrifice on the heathen altar: "Which thing, when Mattathias saw, he was inflamed with zeal, and his reins trembled, neither could he forbear to show anger according to judgment; wherefore he ran, and slew him upon the altar."[2] Then he killed the king's officer.

With his five sons Mattathias fled to the mountains, and there they were joined by hundreds of the Hasidæans, who were all ready to follow now that a leader had appeared. At first they formed in bands for harassing the enemy, overturning heathen altars and killing apostate Jews, but soon they organized for defensive warfare. The aged Mattathias soon died, but his work was taken up by his five sons, who were named John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan. The father wisely left the leadership of the band to Judas Maccabæus ("the Hammerer"), from whom came the name by which all the family are designated.[3]

Judas Maccabæus and his victories.—Space is lacking in which to speak of the remarkable victories gained over the Syrian armies by Judas, who was the ablest military leader the Hebrews ever had. His

[1] 1 Macc. 2. 17–20.

[2] 1 Macc. 2. 24.

[3] The name "Hasmoneans" also is applied to the Maccabees, and is derived from a supposed ancestor by the name of Hasmon.

little army was wholly untrained, with the poorest equipment except as they captured it from the enemy, yet they steadily gained ground. In most of the battles the Syrian army outnumbered the Jewish six to one, and had the best equipment then known. In favor of the Jews were only two things: they knew the mountain fastnesses as the enemy did not, and they had the *right* on their side; they were fighting for home and family and religion—all that men everywhere have held most dear. The Syrian soldiers were merely paid mercenaries.

By B. C. 165 Judas had captured Jerusalem, except the citadel. We can imagine the feelings of the faithful as they gathered once more within the sacred precincts of the temple that had been so vilely polluted. The old, unclean altar stones must not be used again, so they built a new altar, and with a joyous celebration lasting eight days the temple was rededicated. This event is still commemorated by a yearly feast.

An unequal battle.—Judas was now at the height of his power. He had won for his people the respect of all the Asiatic nations, and the Syrian armies had learned to fear him. Just at this time Antiochus died while on an expedition in the far East. Judas now attempted to capture the citadel, and would have done so had it not been that some apostate Jews escaped to Antioch for reenforcements. An army was dispatched to Jerusalem consisting, according to First Maccabees, of one hundred thousand footmen, twenty thousand horsemen, and thirty-two elephants trained for war. The account of the battle is intensely interesting.

"And to the end that they might provoke the elephants to fight, they showed them the blood of

grapes and mulberries. Moreover, they divided the beasts among the armies, and for every elephant they appointed a thousand men, armed with coats of mail, and with helmets of brass on their heads; and beside this, for every beast were ordained five hundred horsemen of the best. . . . And upon the beasts were there strong towers of wood, which covered every one of them and were girt fast to them with devices; there were also upon every one two and thirty strong men, that fought upon them, beside the Indian that ruled him."

The beginning of religious freedom.—The Syrian army next laid siege to Jerusalem, and things began to look dark for Judaism. Just at the opportune moment, however, there was rivalry in the court at Antioch, which caused the leader of the army to proceed there in all haste. Judas was persuaded to surrender the city, with the stipulation that the Jews should be allowed to obey the commands of their religion. Then the Syrian army marched away. This is the end of the Jewish struggle for religious freedom. There was still war, but it had a different motive. The clash between antagonistic ideas still continued, and the Jews had yet to gain full political freedom.

The death of Judas and rule of Jonathan.—When Judas fell in battle, in 161, facing an army of twenty thousand with eight hundred men, he was in control of a territory almost as large as the kingdom of David. His brother Jonathan was chosen "ruler and captain," and for six years he steadily grew in strength, but he was finally put to death through the treachery of the Syrian chiefs. Simon, the only remaining brother, assumed the leadership. Of all the five brothers he seems to have been the noblest. Though

the eldest, after the death of John, he never courted power, and was well content to follow the leadership of his brothers. Under Simon, political independence was secured, and from that time until the annexation of Judæa by Rome, the Jews had their long-coveted independent state. As Simon was the first of the

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

TOMBS OF THE MACCABEES AT MODEIN

Maccabæan rulers (they were not called kings until later), his regime will be taken up in the next lesson.

SOURCES:

The uprising of Mattathias and his sons, 1 Macc. 2; Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 1, Sec. 3–6.
The achievements of Judas Maccabæus, 1 Macc. 3–8; Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 1, Sec. 4–6.
The death of Judas and appointment of Jonathan, 1 Macc. 9.
The beginning of Simon's leadership, 1 Macc. 13; Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 2, Sec. 1–3.
Songs of triumph, Psalms 85 and 110.

QUESTIONS

1. Locate Modein on the map and explain its title to fame.
2. What incident started the Maccabæan wars?
3. How did the army of Judas Maccabæus compare with that of the Syrians in numbers and equipment? In fighting power?
4. What were the results, in general, of the battles between Syrians and Jews?
5. Characterize Judas as a military leader.
6. How and when was religious freedom won by the Maccabees?

LESSON LVII

THE MACCABÆAN STATE

THE period of Jewish independence under the Maccabees began gloriously with the rule of Simon, but ended most ingloriously not quite eighty years later, when the quarrels of the last ruling generation of the family invited the interference of the Roman empire. Its best days were in the time of Simon, when the heroic struggle for freedom had not yet been forgotten. From that time onward there was a steady decline in the unity of the people and in the patriotism and ability of the rulers. The later Maccabæan kings were thoroughly in sympathy with Hellenism and almost ceased to be Jews. The Jewish state was finally wrecked by the hatred and bitter rivalry of classes within it and the perfidy of some of its leaders.

Simon's beneficent administration.—The years of Simon's rule, B. C. 142–135, form one of the brightest periods of Israel's history. War had made Judæa desolate. Peace and industry brought fruitfulness to the barren hillsides, and happiness and prosperity reigned. As we read in First Maccabees a description of the times of Simon, it is difficult to realize that the author is giving us a picture of the much-persecuted Jewish people:

"As for the land *of Judæa*, that was quiet all the days of Simon; for he sought the good of his nation. . . . Then did they till the ground in peace, and the earth gave her increase, and the trees of the field their fruit. The ancient men sat all in the streets, communing together of good things, and the young men put on

glorious and warlike apparel. . . . He made peace in the land, and Israel rejoiced with great joy: for every man sat under his vine and his fig tree, and there was none to fray them."[1] Simon was held in the highest esteem by the people, and decrees were passed by "the priests, leaders and people" that he should hold and have the right to transmit to his descendants the offices of "civil governor, military chief, and high priest."

Thus, with all the marks of a king but without the name (for the Jews would have no king over them), Simon ruled the Jewish state for eight years. Not all his beneficent work on behalf of his people, however, could save him from meeting the violent death that befell all the five Maccabæan brothers. He was assassinated by his trusted son-in-law, Ptolemy, who was actuated by hope of reward from the Syrian court. Ptolemy gave a banquet in honor of Simon, which he unsuspectingly attended, accompanied by his two oldest sons, and all three were foully murdered.

Origin of Jewish sects.—As a result of the Maccabæan wars certain sects grew up, which, by the time of Jesus, had come to assume very great importance in Judaism, especially the Pharisees.

The Pharisees at first were men who separated themselves from the heathenizing forces and tendencies in the nation. (The name "Pharisee" means "separatist.") They were the natural successors of the Hasidæans, who had been foremost in the support of the Maccabees in their struggle for religious freedom. That freedom having been won, they wanted the priesthood kept free from civil affairs, and they would have had the race devote all its energies to matters of the law. The power of the Pharisees lay in their religious zeal,

[1] 1 Macc. 14. 4–13.

which gave them a place of large influence as spiritual guides of the people. They found their main function in teaching and preaching.

Some of their ideas with regard to the observance of the law seem to us petty and even absurd, for to them each detail was as important as the weightiest matters of morality. We recall what Jesus said about them in this connection (Matt. 23. 23). Yet in the Maccabæan period the Pharisees were the soul and conscience of the nation, the stern Puritans of Judaism. Christendom owes them a great debt for preserving the essentials of the religion of Israel against the onslaughts of Hellenism, and thus unconsciously preparing the way for Christianity.

The Sadducees were comparatively few in number, and constituted the aristocratic, worldly class. They had been at the head of affairs in the state, had come in contact with foreign ideas, and prided themselves on their breadth and their culture. Of course they were Hellenic in sympathy. To them the Pharisees seemed narrow, crude, and provincial, while the Pharisees regarded them as worldly and irreligious. While not all priests were Sadducees, most of them were, and the high-priest always belonged to that class. For two hundred years after the return from captivity the high priests were the real leaders of the Jewish nation, but by the end of the Greek period they had lost most of their influence. The name "Sadducee" has been thought to be derived from Zadok, a priest of the time of David.

The Essenes were a sect who led an ascetic life, dwelling in communities like a monastic brotherhood. They were simple, devout, and God-fearing, ministering generously of their substance to the poor.

The tyranny of John Hyrcanus.—The successor of Simon was his son, John Hyrcanus, who ruled with a strong hand for thirty years. Though able, he was narrow-minded and tyrannical. He enlarged his dominions, but in doing so aroused the undying hatred of conquered peoples by his brutal methods. He destroyed the temple of the Samaritans on Mount Gerizim, which for two hundred years had been the center of all their life, and laid waste their chief city, Samaria. He compelled the Edomites to adopt Judaism or leave the land of their forefathers, and they chose the former alternative. Thus he introduced into Judaism an element that never could be assimilated and fanned the flames of those bitter animosities which eventually destroyed the state. At his death he was master of all the territory from the Mediterranean Sea to the eastern desert, and from southern Galilee to the desert on the south. From a material point of view, Judaism was making progress, but it was in danger of losing the spiritual ideals which had created it.

As Simon's heir, John Hyrcanus was, of course, high priest. His unsuitability for the office was apparent, and the stricter Jews were unalterably opposed to his continuance in it, though there was no open rebellion against him. He was the first of the Maccabees to identify himself with the Sadducees.

Aristobulus and Alexander Jannæus.—John Hyrcanus at his death left the government to his wife, and the high priesthood to his son, Aristobulus, perhaps thinking that a separation of the two offices would appease the Pharisees. Aristobulus was the first of the Maccabees to assume the title of king, thereby greatly offending the Pharisees. Fortunately, his evil reign was a short one. After one year of tyrannous

misrule the first act of which was to imprison his mother, he died a miserable death, and his still more unworthy brother, Alexander Jannæus, having married his widow, Alexandra, became king. This ruler estranged the Pharisees still more, and widened the breach between them and the Sadducees.

Alexandra and Pharisaic domination.—Jannæus at his death willed the kingdom to his wife, Alexandra, who was deeply in sympathy with the Pharisees. Josephus says, "While she governed other people, the Pharisees governed her." They had place and power, and the Sadducees were obliged to go into hiding. Under Alexandra the Sanhedrin, which had already come into being, was reorganized and given supreme authority in judicial and religious matters. Two more important steps were taken. A system of elementary schools was established in connection with the synagogue; and a temple tax of half a shekel was imposed upon every Jewish man over twenty years old. This assured support of the temple tended to free Judaism from the domination of the wealthy Sadducees.

End of the Maccabæan kingdom.—The end came in B. C. 63, when the two unworthy sons of Alexandra, in plunging to their own ruin, pulled the state after them. Of these two sons, Hyrcanus II fell heir to the kingship and high priesthood, but these were soon wrested from him by his brother, Aristobulus II. The aid of Rome was sought by each against the other, and Rome settled the difficulties by making Judæa a Roman dependency. The famous general, Pompey, came to Jerusalem and besieged it three months. Taking advantage of the unwillingness of the Jews to fight on the Sabbath, a breach was made in the walls on that day and troops poured in. Priests were cut down at

the altar and thousands of people were massacred. Pompey and his officers committed the unpardonable sacrilege of entering the Holy of holies, but they did not carry off the treasures of the temple. We are told of Pompey's great surprise to find within the inclosure no images or other symbols. The God worshiped by the Jews was a Spirit. This was something new to Pompey. Hyrcanus II was restored to the high priesthood by Pompey and became virtually ruler of Jerusalem.

The Jewish nation had now lost most that had been purchased at tremendous sacrifice in the last one hundred years. It was a tributary of Rome, with no political independence. All the newer territorial gains along the coast and in Samaria were placed under the Roman governor of Syria. And yet the best element in Judaism saw God's hand in all this. According to their view, the worldliness and selfish ambitions of the later Maccabæan rulers had been punished, and the chastisement was for the good of the nation. They must redouble their efforts to keep the law and be worthy of the glorious kingdom God had in store for them under the rule of the Messiah.

SOURCES:

The Jewish state under Simon, 1 Macc. 14–16.
The rule of John Hyrcanus, Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 2, Sec. 3–8.
The first Maccabæan king, Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 3.
The end of the Maccabæan state, Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 6.

QUESTIONS

1. Name the Maccabæan rulers in order and characterize the reigns of Simon, John Hyrcanus, and Alexandra.
2. What was the cause of the downfall of the Maccabees and the loss of Jewish independence?
3. Explain how the Jews came under Roman rule.
4. Look up in a Bible dictionary "Pharisees," "Sadducees," "Essenes," and "Zealots," and discuss the origin and the early characteristics of each of these sects.
5. What was the Sanhedrin?

LESSON LVIII

ROMAN RULE

In our study of the Hebrews in their relations with other nations we have seen the star of empire gradually moving westward. Babylonia, Persia, Macedonia, in turn dominated the world. Rome made her appearance as a world power in the third century B. C., and at the close of the Maccabæan period was steadily gaining the ascendency. The Roman general, Pompey, had already made important conquests in Syria at the time he was summoned by the warring factions in Jerusalem.

The rule of Rome over Judæa began in B. C. 63, and continued as long as there was a Jewish nation, for after the destruction of Jerusalem in A. D. 70 the nation ceased to be. Rome's policy was on the whole generous, though firm. With her wonderful power of preserving order and administering law she eliminated the worst evils of Judæa—the constant warring between factions. For many years the weak Hyrcanus II was continued in the high priesthood, the tool of the Roman authorities who kept him there. Aristobulus II and three of his children were taken by Pompey to Rome, one son having escaped on the way, and all were compelled to walk in front of Pompey's chariot, as a spectacle for the Roman populace at the time of that leader's great triumph in B. C. 61.

Origin of the Herod family.—In the last lesson we found that a Maccabæan ruler (John Hyrcanus) had forcibly Judaized the Edomites, now called Idumæans.

Judæa now had to suffer for this inexcusable and brutal action, for, as one result of it, the Herod family, for five generations, had a disturbing influence upon the destinies of Judæa. As Jews they held places of power, but they were not Jews at heart, nor could they be expected to be; so they did not understand or sympathize with the people whom they governed. While as a family they were not lacking in ability, and while much that is good came to the Jewish people through them, it may justly be said that they were the source of more evil than good.

Antipater.—The founder of the house, Antipater, was an Idumæan, who became governor of Idumæa in succession to his father, who though of lowly birth, had fought his way to high position by strength and cunning. When the Jewish state came under the control of Rome, Antipater hastened to curry favor with Pompey. He also made himself indispensable to Hyrcanus II, and soon was the controlling influence at Jerusalem. When Cæsar superseded Pompey in power, Antipater immediately transferred his loyalty to him, and performed such valuable service for Cæsar at a critical time that favors were showered upon him. He was made procurator of Judæa, his son Phasæl governor of Jerusalem, and his son Herod (afterward called the Great) governor of Galilee. The mother of these young men was an Arabian, a fact which should be remembered in trying to account for their character.

The secret of the success of the Herods in attaining place and privilege was their ability to keep themselves in favor with the power at Rome. Devoid of principle, and caring little what happened to anyone else so long as their power was secure, they were past masters in the art of diplomacy. In B. C. 44, when

Cæsar was assassinated, all the Herods made haste to show their devotion to Cassius, though Cæsar had been their greatest benefactor and Cassius was one of his murderers.

The rise of Herod the Great.—As a young man of twenty-five Herod earned the gratitude of the Galilæans and the approval of Rome by exterminating the robber bands that infested Galilee, putting their leader to death. The Sanhedrin, however, complained that he had usurped their prerogative, as they alone had the right to impose the death penalty. When they summoned Herod to trial he appeared with a bodyguard and a purple robe over his armor, which so overawed that august body that they allowed him to escape without punishment.

The revolt of Antigonus.—Soon came one of those periodical upheavals in Judæa that were caused by the appearance of one of the descendants of the Maccabees as an aspirant for the throne. Whenever one of these would-be kings appeared, so great was the loyalty of the Jews to the house of Maccabees and so violent their hatred of Rome that thousands of them were ready to rally about the new leader and sacrifice their lives if need be in the hope of Jewish independence. Understanding this, it is not difficult for us to see how a few years later Pilate could condemn to death an innocent Galilæan because he had been accused of aspiring to be king of the Jews. "Thou art no friend of Cæsar if this man is allowed to go," was the threat that finally brought about the crucifixion of Jesus. This uprising of Antigonus was the most serious of all that had yet occurred. The claimant for the throne was a son of Aristobulus II, who by the aid of the Parthians succeeded in establishing himself as king in Jerusalem, a position which he maintained for three

years. Herod escaped to a fortress on the Dead Sea, while his brother Phasæl committed suicide in prison. Hyrcanus II was carried into captivity. Herod, however, succeeded in getting to Rome, where he secured the ear of Antony and Octavius. They promptly made him "king of the Jews" and at once he went to work to make good his title. After two years of fighting he had won all Judæa except Jerusalem. At last, by a determined attack on the Sabbath day, the Roman soldiers made a breach in the walls and the temple itself was captured, with the slaughter of thousands, irrespective of age or sex. Antigonus was scourged and then beheaded. At last, in B. C. 37, Herod was in reality king of the Jews, an office which he held until his death in B. C. 4, hated and feared by his subjects.

While the siege of Jerusalem was going on, Herod went to Samaria and married Mariamne, a beautiful Maccabæan princess, the grandchild of both Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, thus uniting in his own family the claims of both rivals to the throne. Through this marriage, to a woman whom he passionately loved, came the darkest tragedies of Herod's miserable life.

SOURCES: Josephus, *Jewish War.*

Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem, I, 7.
Antipater wins the friendship of Cæsar, I, 9.
The advancement of Antipater and his sons, I, 10.

QUESTIONS

1. Give a brief account of the rise of Rome as a world power.[1]
2. How and when did Judæa come under the control of Rome?
3. Trace the steps in the rise in power of the Herods and give their characteristics as a family.
4. Give an account of the revolt of Antigonus and the results.

[1] See Breasted's *Ancient Times*, pp. 484–563.

LESSON LIX

THE REIGN OF HEROD THE GREAT

The chief interest that attaches to Herod is that during his reign Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem of Judæa. The impression we get of Herod from the simple gospel story is in entire accord with the findings of secular history. He was a man of commanding ability and indomitable will, but conscienceless and merciless. Though of keen intellect, he had the tyrant's suspicious nature, which made him a prey to the machinations of others. With inordinate admiration for Hellenic culture he was at heart a barbarian.

It is difficult to be entirely fair in forming our judgment of Herod's administration because we are unconsciously influenced by our knowledge of the terrible crimes committed by him in his fear lest he should lose the throne. There are abundant evidences that he wished to stand well with his subjects. He showed marked favor to the Pharisees and treated the Jewish religion and customs with considerable respect. The Jews, however, never appreciated anything he did for them, always suspecting his motives, hampering him in every way, and calling him "the Idumæan slave." It is well to remember that they were not an easy people to govern—probably no subjugated race has ever been more difficult to control than were the Jews of the last one hundred years before the final destruction of Jerusalem. Centuries of ill-treatment had filled them with suspicion and bitterness. Herod's great

ability as an administrator brought peace and unusual prosperity to his people, and his high favor at Rome secured for them many benefits which, otherwise, they might not have had. As one writer remarks, "He made life and property in Palestine safe from every foe but his own tyranny."

Herod's treatment of the Sanhedrin.—One of his first acts after ascending the throne was to put to death forty-five Jewish nobles, members of the Sanhedrin, who had espoused the cause of Antigonus, seizing their property for his own use. Though this slaughter cannot be excused it can be partially explained in the fact that Jerusalem was a hotbed of intrigue at this time. Six thousand Pharisees who had refused to take the oath of allegiance to him were allowed to withdraw from public life in safety and to devote their energies to the study and teaching of the law. This explains why the Pharisees came to have a place of such large influence in the time of Christ. Herod kept for himself the right of appointing the high priests.

Herod's family tragedies.—Cornill remarks that "the history of the reign of Herod is a history of palace details." There were few events of national importance, and we associate the name of Herod chiefly with his domestic tragedies, the tale of which is one of the darkest in the annals of history. As long as a single descendant of the house of Maccabees remained alive Herod considered his throne in danger, and one after another of these unfortunates was ruthlessly murdered until they were almost exterminated. His first victim was Mariamne's brother, Aristobulus, whose mother had left no stone unturned to secure the high priesthood for her son, though he was but seventeen years of age. Josephus says, "When he had put on the

holy vestments and had approached the altar at a festival, the assembled multitude wept for joy." This aroused Herod's jealousy and the young man was secretly held under the water in a swimming pool until dead. Herod was summoned to Rome by Antony to clear himself of the charge of this murder, which he did by artful misrepresentations, and returned more secure than ever on the throne.

Herod's evil genius was his sister, Salome, though all his family, being Idumæans, hated Mariamne and her aristocratic, royal family. Salome and her mother succeeded in convincing Herod that Mariamne was untrue to him. The proud and beautiful woman was promptly executed, meeting her death with a fortitude worthy of her royal lineage. The effect of this murder upon Herod was terrible, for he passionately loved her. Josephus says, "He could not think she was dead, but in his sorrow talked to her as if she were still alive." Before his death he understood his mistake and suffered bitter remorse.

Within the next few years Herod was guilty of the murder of Mariamne's mother, and of the aged Hyrcanus, her grandfather. Salome's husband had already fallen at his hand. We shall learn later of the murder of three of Herod's sons.

His building enterprises.—If we ask why Herod has been called "the Great" the answer is, chiefly because of his marvelous building enterprises, and his lavish distribution of money where it would do the most good in making a name for him. He built a cordon of fortresses on the frontier of the country. He constructed many cities on the Roman model and gave them foreign names, erecting in them statues to the heathen gods and to the deification of the emperor.

Chief of these cities were Sebaste, the ancient Samaria, and Cæsarea, a harbor city thirty miles north of Joppa. Sebaste he rebuilt on a magnificent plan, with a stadium, theaters, baths, and splendid streets. His crowning work, however, was Cæsarea. The seacoast of Palestine is a very rough one, with few places permitting of any kind of a harbor. Up to this time Joppa had been the only harbor possessed by the Jews, and it was a very poor one. Choosing a great rocky point at a place called Straton's Tower, that it might form a breakwater on the north side, Herod built a city and a harbor that commanded the admiration of the world. Cæsarea figures frequently in New Testament history. Saint Paul was once a prisoner here.

His lavish gifts.—Herod did not confine his building enterprises to Palestine, but used freely the revenues wrung from his small and poor land in making princely gifts to foreign cities. To Antioch he gave a splendid marble colonnade lining both sides of her principal street; to Rhodes a Pythian temple, to several other cities, gymnasia; to Sidon and Damascus, theaters; to Laodicea, an aqueduct. This by no means completes the list of his gifts to foreign cities. At large expense he rehabilitated the Olympic games, for the benefit of the entire Hellenic world. It is not strange that so munificent a king should be given by his contemporaries the title "Great," or that Augustus should say of him that "the dominions of Herod were too little for the greatness of his soul."

Herod's Temple.—His special "bait" to the Jews however, was the new temple he built for them. In comparison with the magnificent buildings with which he dotted Jerusalem, the temple of Zerubbabel, now five hundred years old, must have looked somewhat

shabby. Herod called the leaders of the people together and made a skillful speech in which he told them how near his heart their interests were, and how he proposed to give them a temple worthy of their religion. The people were not at all enthusiastic over the plan, for they distrusted their crafty king and believed this was his method of depriving them of a temple altogether. As evidence of his sincerity, the

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THE TEMPLE AREA

materials for the new building were brought to the ground before the old building was taken down. A thousand priests were put in training as builders so that no unclean hands might touch the sacred edifice.

The temple area was greatly enlarged by a huge platform of stonework, which was supported by arches and pillars. (See a picture of the so-called stables of Solomon.) Around this area of about one thousand

square feet, were beautiful colonnades of marble, roofed with cedar. Here the people found a pleasant promenade and lounging place, and here the rabbis held their schools. The work of construction was begun in B. C. 20, but in eight years only the temple area was completed. The temple itself was not entirely finished until A. D. 64, only six years before its destruction by Titus, though it was in use even before the birth of Christ. The temple was magnificent, the pride and joy of the Jewish people. Josephus says that from a distance the whole resembled a snow-covered mountain, and that the light reflected from the gilded porch dazzled the eyes of the spectator "like the sun's own rays." The hatred of the people for Herod was so great that they felt no gratitude to him for their beautiful temple, and when he placed a large golden eagle, emblem of heathen Rome, over the gate, their indignation knew no bounds. When it was rumored that Herod was dead some students of a school in Jerusalem climbed up on the temple, let themselves down with ropes, and chopped the golden eagle to pieces. For this, Herod, who was almost at the point of death, condemned the students and certain of their teachers to be burnt alive.

His miserable end.—The closing years of his life were wretched beyond expression. He trusted no one and no one trusted him. Three years before the end of his life he put to death his two sons, Aristobulus and Alexander, whose mother was Mariamne. They had been sent to Rome for their education, and when they returned, "tall, noble-looking men, conscious of the royal blood in their veins," the hearts of the Jewish people went out to them. As they plainly showed that they resented their mother's murder, it was not diffi-

cult for Herod's eldest son by another marriage to convince him that they were plotting against him; so they were led to their slaughter. On his deathbed Herod ordered the execution of this treacherous son, by whom he had been duped, as he discovered too late. Josephus says that in his old age he was very melancholy and "depressed by the calamities that had happened to him in connection with his children, so that he had no pleasure in life, even when he was in health."

His last infamous act seems to reveal the mind of a madman. Knowing that he must soon die he summoned to the hippodrome in Jericho (in which city he spent his last days) "the most illustrious men out of every village in all Judæa," and had them locked in. To his sister, Salome, he gave the order that as soon as he had breathed his last all these men should be put to death, "and then all Judæa and every family in it will weep unwilling tears at my death." Salome did not execute the order. Herod died in B. C. 4 and a great wave of rejoicing swept over the country when it was known that he was no more.

SOURCES:

Herod wins the favor of Augustus, Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 20.
Herod's gifts to foreign cities, Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 21.
Some of his murders, Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 22, 27.
Herod's death, Josephus, *Jewish War*, I, 33.
Herod's Temple, Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, XV, 11.

QUESTIONS

1. Give the dates of Herod's reign.
2. In what respects was his reign beneficial to the Jewish people?
3. Wherein lay his strength and wherein his weakness?
4. Describe his building activities.
5. Give a description of Herod's temple.[1]
6. What temples preceded it on the same site?
7. What is Herod's title to be called "the Great"? (For a vivid picture of Herod's life and times, see Stephen Phillips' tragedy, "Herod.")

[1] *Hastings's Bible Dictionary*, pp. 901–4.

LESSON LX

PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF JESUS

Augustus confirmed the will of Herod by which he divided his kingdom among his three sons. Archelaus received Judæa, Samaria, and Idumæa, with the royal title. Herod Antipas became tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa; while Philip governed the territory northeast of the Sea of Galilee as tetrarch.

Of these three sons Archelaus proved the worst. He was a man of violent and arbitrary character and utterly unfitted to govern, and Judaism contained elements impossible to conciliate. Deputations of Jews waited upon Augustus at two different times to ask for his removal because of his "barbarous and tyrannical" government. The second time their request was granted and Augustus banished him to Gaul, annexing his dominions to Syria. From this time (A. D. 6) until the destruction of Jerusalem, with an interval of three years, Judæa was governed by Roman procurators who had their official residence at Cæsarea.

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THE SEA OF GALILEE

The procuratorship of Judæa.—The difficulties of a procurator were considerable, yet only men of third-

rate ability were appointed. Something more than this was needed in dealing with the always antagonistic Jewish race. At the time of the annual Passover feast, the influx of Jews from all parts of the world made the total population between two and three million, crowded into the small area of one square mile, for Jerusalem is "a city that is compact together." These people were moved by a religious fervor which made them, when opposed, capable of great excesses. The procurator usually went up to Jerusalem at the Passover time in order to quell disturbances. The procurator best known to us is Pontius Pilate, whose name is saved from oblivion by his connection with the crucifixion of Jesus.

Herod Antipas.—Our particular interest in Antipas is that he was ruler of Galilee during those years when the feet of Jesus Christ trod the hills of Galilee and when his voice was heard in the synagogues throughout the land. Of the three sons of Herod the Great, Antipas was most like his father in his love of magnificence and of building enterprises. His reign was distinguished by the construction of Tiberias, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, a city built on the Greek model. He spared no expense to make it worthy of its object, which was to do honor to the emperor Tiberius, for whom it was named.

Herod Antipas was guilty of the murder of John the Baptist, who lost his life for freely speaking his mind regarding the infamous marriage of Herod to Herodias, his brother's wife. It was probably fear of his Roman masters that prevented Antipas from freeing Jesus at the trial, but he refused to pass the death sentence upon him. In A. D. 39 Antipas was banished to Gaul by the emperor Caligula, having

been accused of treason by Agrippa, afterward King Agrippa I.

Herod Philip.—Though the poorest of the provinces of Herod the Great fell to Philip, he made the best ruler of all, and his reign of thirty-seven years was of much benefit to his people. His territory, which included Ituræa and Trachonitis, contained few Jews. He built for himself a capital city, Cæsarea Philippi, and here he lived as a heathen in his heathen capital, making no pretense of being a Jew.

The Jewish sects.—The various sects whose origin we noted in the Maccabæan period still exist in the time of Jesus, though important changes have taken place, most of them for the worse. The priesthood is still in the hands of the worldly Sadducees, the high priest is appointed by the civil ruler, and few of the priesthood aspire to know anything beyond the ritual and temple ceremonial. The Pharisees who so nobly began as the Puritans of their day, sternly demanding religious freedom, have at this time degenerated into a narrow, formal, dogmatic sect, who are so busy keeping the letter of the law that they have lost all interest in the spirit. As an example of the pettiness of some of the requirements, work forbidden on the Sabbath was grouped in thirty-nine classes! Life was a hopeless succession of impossible tasks.

The scribes were still the teachers of Israel, the most highly revered class in the community. They had once been great and wise leaders of the people, as we have seen, but were so no longer. A scribe must retain in his memory not only all the Mosaic written law, but the immense body of oral law that had grown up about it through the interpretation of previous scribes and rabbis. Religion consisted in

ritual, sacrifices, feasts, pilgrimages, tithes, Sabbath-keeping—all this to please God and win his favor! It was to the people toiling under such burdens as these that Jesus came with his fresh, heaven-sent message. His denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees was most severe, but it was just. They were indeed "blind leaders

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

THE WAY TO BETHANY

of the blind." His opinion of them is most fully expressed in the twenty-third chapter of Saint Matthew.

It must in justice be said on behalf of the Pharisees, that their teachings were vastly superior to those of the heathen religions about them. "Despite the excesses, Pharisaism succeeded in grinding into the very soul of Jewish life, be it never so humble or degraded, moral distinctions as regards the acts of the individual such as Hellenism even at its best never enforced."[1]

[1] Shailer Mathews, *New Testament Times in Palestine*, p. 86.

Rome's tolerant treatment of the Jews.—They were not oppressed, and much consideration was shown their intense religious feeling. This large religious freedom was one of the most important factors in the spread of Christianity. Rome recognized the sanctity of the temple and the right of the Jews to kill even a Roman citizen who went beyond the

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THE WALL OF JERUSALEM

court of the Gentiles. The Jews were required to take the oath of allegiance to each new emperor, and there were daily sacrifices in the temple for the emperor's welfare. The Sanhedrin had jurisdiction over all matters that affected the Jews except that by the time of Christ the death penalty could not be inflicted without the consent of the procurator.

The world prepared for Christianity.—Jesus Christ came to a world that had been made ready for his

divine message. It was a world at peace, even though that peace was maintained by the sword. The Roman empire extended from Britain to the African desert, and from the Atlantic to the Euphrates. There was a unity in it that had never existed before, due to a certain loyalty to Rome. Rome's greatness dazzled her thirty or forty provinces and filled them with a desire to have a share in her glory. She built splendid roads for her armies and kept them safe for the traveler. Over these Saint Paul and the other apostles journeyed in spreading the gospel message. There was a universal language — Greek — which was understood wherever the apostles preached. Most important of all, perhaps, was the dispersion of the Jewish race, so that wherever the apostles went they found a hearing in the synagogues. The Jews of the Dispersion were great missionaries and had made numerous proselytes. Many Gentiles who had not fully accepted Judaism were dissatisfied with the emptiness of their former belief and were to be found in the Jewish synagogues. These Gentiles are sometimes called in the New

Photo by Ismar J. Peritz

A STREET IN JERUSALEM

Testament "God-fearing Greeks." Among these were some of Paul's most faithful converts in every place where he preached. It has truly been said that "Rome built the roads for Christianity, Greece gave it a language, but the Jews had prepared the approach to men's hearts and minds."

SOURCES: Josephus, *Jewish War*.
The rule of Archelaus, II, 1, 2, 6.
Three Jewish sects, II, 8.
The banishment and death of Herod Antipas, II, 9.

QUESTIONS

1. Point out on the map the divisions into which the dominions of Herod the Great were divided after his death, and name and characterize the ruler of each.
2. In what ways did Herod Antipas come into contact with Jesus? (Luke 23. 7–15.)
3. What was Jesus' opinion of him? (Luke 13. 32.)
4. Describe the various sects in the time of Jesus.
5. What was Jesus' attitude toward the scribes and Pharisees and why?
6. What was the relation of the synagogue to Christianity?
7. Mention the conditions in the Roman empire that proved especially favorable to the spread of Christianity.

LESSON LXI

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

THE causes that led to the final destruction of Jerusalem and the Hebrew state were many, but among them these three stand out prominently:

1. The stupid brutality of the Roman procurators, who goaded the people into rebellion.

2. The internal strife between warring factions filled with a murderous hatred for each other, and

3. The fanatical zeal of the Jews, many of whom fully believed that in defying Rome they were helping to bring about the long-expected Messianic kingdom. Josephus says, "What most stirred them up was the ambiguous oracle that was found also in their sacred writings that about that time one from their country should become ruler of the world."

The last Jewish kings.—Herod Agrippa I was a grandson of Herod the Great and Mariamne, and thus a scion of the house of Maccabees. In his youth in Rome he had been a boon companion of Caligula, who, when he became emperor, in A. D. 37, conferred upon Agrippa the dominions of his uncle Philip, who had died, with the title of king. Subsequently he was given the dominions of Antipas and later Claudius made him king of Judæa. On the whole his reign of three years proved a happy one for his subjects, whom he succeeded in conciliating. To please the Jews he persecuted the Christians, and caused the death of James, the brother of John. Agrippa left a son seventeen years of age, but he was considered too young to succeed

his father, so Judæa went back under the rule of Roman procurators and remained so until the end. This son was afterward given by the emperor Claudius the tetrarchy of Chalchis (at the foot of Lebanon), with the title of king (Agrippa II), and later, parts of Galilee and Peræa were added to his dominions. In Acts 26

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JERUSALEM FROM THE SOUTHWEST

is recorded a speech made by Paul before him during Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea.

The seven imperial procurators.—It is hardly worth while to record the names of these incompetent and despotic men, yet they had the power of life and death over their subjects, whom they goaded into revolt. During the period of bloodshed and anarchy in Judæa which ensued, the apostle Paul was going about through the Roman empire and founding Chris-

tian churches. The procurators Felix and Festus are of especial interest to us because Paul was brought before them at Cæsarea on charges preferred by the Jews of Jerusalem (Acts 24. 24; 26. 25). We know little to the disadvantage of Festus, but a secret society of assassins was organized to cope with the cruelty of Felix. There was no safety in Jerusalem during his

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THE DAMASCUS GATE—JERUSALEM

regime and all through the land villages were plundered and houses set on fire.

The beginning of the end.—In A. D. 54 that monster of wickedness, Nero, became emperor. The worst of all the procurators of Judæa were the last two, Albinus and Florus, appointed in his reign. Of Florus, Josephus says: "He made an open boast of his crimes against the people. . . . His cruelty was

pitiless, his infamies shameless. . . . He robbed whole cities and ruined whole communities. Whole districts were depopulated by his greed; multitudes left their homes and fled into foreign provinces." The Jewish people could stand no more. Allowed to have nothing whatever to say about their own government,

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TOMBS OF THE KINGS—JERUSALEM

treated as a nation of slaves, any fate seemed better to them than to go on as they were going.

A declaration of war.—When in A. D. 66 the Jews refused to offer the daily sacrifices for the emperor in the temple, it was evident that they were throwing down the gauntlet to Rome. In vain their more cool-headed leaders, seeing that war would mean suicide for the nation, tried to avert it. It was too late. The fever was in the blood.

The saddest feature of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish state is the part played in it by the warring factions of the Jews themselves, who were as eager to exterminate each other as they were the common enemy. The aristocratic party was led by Eleazar, the son of the high priest, the anti-aristocratic party by one Simon ben-Giora, while the extremist party,

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THE WAILING-PLACE OF THE JEWS—JERUSALEM

the Zealots, were under the leadership of the hot-headed and reckless John of Gischala. The Idumæans were summoned to the assistance of the Zealots, and robbery and murder held high carnival in Jerusalem. A store of grain that would have enabled the inhabitants to endure a long siege was burned as a result of this civil strife.

Nero sent one of his ablest generals, Vespasian, to

put down the revolt. He began with Galilee, which it took a year to reduce; then he moved down toward Jerusalem and gradually closed in on the city. Josephus, afterward the celebrated historian of the Jews, was in command of the Jewish forces in Galilee, but his record as a patriot is not blameless.

The siege and capture of Jerusalem.—Nero died in A. D. 68, and in 69 his successor, Galba, was assassinated. Six months later Vespasian was proclaimed emperor by the legions in the East, and he returned to Rome, leaving the conduct of the war to his son Titus. The siege of Jerusalem (which began in April, A. D. 70) lasted five months. The miseries of the unhappy city were unspeakable. It contained not only its own dense population, but was filled with pilgrims who had come to attend the Passover. All must be fed, and there was little to eat. People died like flies. Outside of the walls many who tried to escape were crucified. The streets were blocked with unburied dead. Again and again Titus offered clemency in return for the surrender of the city, but the infuriated Jews spurned his offer.

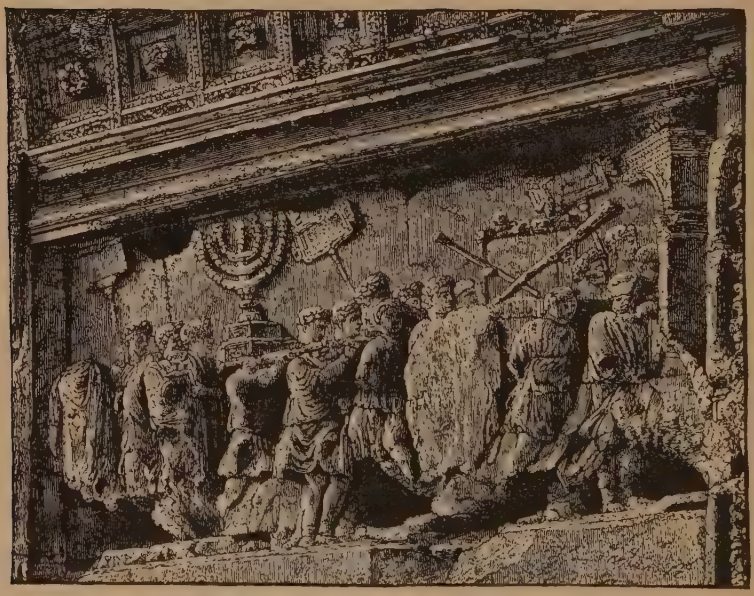
The instrument of war used by Titus for breaking down the walls was the battering-ram, and to provide timber for this and other purposes he cut down every tree within twelve miles of Jerusalem. Huge inclined planes of earth were constructed against the walls and the battering-rams erected upon them. For artillery an enormous sling-shot was used which could throw a stone weighing one hundred and thirty pounds a quarter of a mile. The Jews fought with incredible fury. They dug mines underneath the mounds on which rested the Roman artillery and ruined much of it. Titus was obliged to wait for starvation to com-

plete the grim work. He blockaded the city by a wall of earth five miles long, extending entirely around it. Months passed by, however, before his soldiers succeeded in gaining an entrance to the city.

It was the wish of Titus to spare the temple, but a soldier threw a firebrand into one of its rooms, and the splendid building was doomed. The ten thousand men, women, and children who had taken refuge in it perished either by flame or sword. Over the massacres that ensued it is better to draw the veil of silence. Many of those who escaped had better have died, for they were compelled to fight with wild beasts at Cæsarea, were sold into slavery, or were condemned to perpetual labor in Rome's distant mines. Jerusalem was left in A. D. 70 a heap of ruins, in charge of the tenth Roman legion. Even now, however, one fortress, Masada, remained unconquered and refused to yield. Titus celebrated his triumph in Cæsarea Philippi and Berytus, and in the summer of 71 was given a triumph in Rome. In 72 occurred the remarkable suicide of the garrison at Masada. The commander called his men together and proposed that they should kill their wives and children, then kill each other until only one man was left, who was to set fire to the fortress, then take his own life. This gruesome program was carried out and thus nine hundred sixty persons perished. The siege of Jerusalem remains to this day the saddest and most heroic in history. In the Eternal City the arch of Titus stands as a mute witness to the reality of these tragic events.

The Jerusalem of class hatred and warring factions, of priestly greed and Pharisaic arrogance, ceased to be, but the Jerusalem of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Jesus Christ still lives in the heart of the world. All the best of

Judaism passed over into Christianity, its noblest fruitage. If the time is approaching, as many dare to hope, when small nations shall no longer be the prey of their powerful and rapacious neighbors, as the Jewish state was for so many centuries, and when all civilized peoples shall be free and self-governing, it is primarily due to the growing acceptance on the part of mankind of those principles of justice and kindness which first emanated from the Hebrew race.



THE SEVEN-BRANCHED CANDLESTICK FROM THE ARCH OF TITUS

This arch was erected in Rome to commemorate the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus in A. D. 70. The Roman soldiers are here represented as carrying the seven-branched candlestick, the table of shew-bread, and the silver trumpets, all taken from Herod's temple.

THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

SOURCES:

Paul's contact with Roman rulers, Acts 23. 31–35; 24–26.
The beginning of the rebellion against Rome, Josephus, *Jewish War*, II, 17.
Vespasian sent by Nero to subdue the Jews, Josephus, *Jewish War*, III, 1.
The siege of Jerusalem, Josephus, *Jewish War*, V—IX.

QUESTIONS

1. Who was the last king of Judæa and when did he reign?
2. How was the province governed after that?
3. Discuss the character and work of the Roman procurators.
4. Give the date of the destruction of Jerusalem, the causes that led up to it, and the main facts in connection with it.

LESSON LXII

THE POETICAL AND WISDOM LITERATURE

The poetical books of the Old Testament are Lamentations, Psalms, the Song of Songs, Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes. The three last named belong also to a type of writings known as Wisdom Literature. In addition to the distinctly poetical books there are fragments of poetry scattered through the historical and prophetic books, some of which we have already discussed.

Hebrew poetry.—Most of the early Hebrew poetry has been lost, but enough has survived to show how rich the race was in poetic gifts. No poetry ever written has obtained so great a hold upon all classes and conditions of people as that of the Bible. This seems remarkable when we consider that it was written more than two thousand years ago, in a language of wholly different genius from most of the tongues spoken to-day, and in a part of the world that has produced little else that is known now except to scholars. There are several reasons for the power and persistence of biblical poetry, some of which are these: The simplicity and concreteness of the language, the strong rhythm and music of the verse, the underlying intensity of the feeling, and the loftiness of the moral and spiritual ideals.

The Hebrews produced no epic poetry so far as we know, and little that could be properly classified as dramatic. Their genius was essentially lyrical. Their victories in war were chanted over their dead. Songs

were sung by the laborers in field or vineyard, and by the women as they drew water from the wells.

Parallelism.—All poetry is based upon rhythm. This is secured in English and other modern literatures for the most part by the regular recurrence of accented and unaccented syllables, and the foot is the unit of versification. In Greek and Latin poetry rhythm comes chiefly from the regular recurrence of long and short vowel sounds. Hebrew poetry rarely employs meter, but relies for rhythm upon a certain balance of thought against thought known to-day as parallelism, the unit of poetical expression being the line. Parallelism is not uncommon in modern poetry. It constantly occurs in the poems of Burns and many other familiar poets. Longfellow's Hiawatha, for example, abounds in it.

Most Hebrew poetry is written in couplets, and sometimes these are in pairs. There are many other arrangements which give flexibility and variety to the verse. Until recently Bible poetry has been printed exactly as if it were prose. A version should be used in which the arrangement is poetical.

The book of Lamentations.—This is a collection of five poems which have for their theme the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadrezzar in B. C. 586. The poems are not all by the same author and differ considerably in character and poetic merit. Nowhere else do we get so vivid an idea of the death-agony of the unfortunate city. It was formerly believed that Jeremiah was the author of the book, but most scholars have now rejected that theory. The poems are in elegiac meter, the verse used for dirges, and four of them are alphabetic acrostics.

The Psalter.—The book of Psalms, known as the

Psalter, is a collection of one hundred and fifty sacred lyrics, produced during a period of several hundred years, from pre-exilic times to and including the Maccabæan period. (Some scholars doubt that any are as late as the Maccabæan period.) The authorship and date of the Psalms is uncertain, for the titles do not form part of the original writings, having been added by later editors. The question of authorship, however, does not affect in the slightest degree the intrinsic value of any of the biblical writings.

The Psalter was the noblest prayer book of the early Christian Church, as it has been of Christendom ever since. It represents the inward and spiritual side of Judaism, and is sufficient proof that it was not all narrow and formal. Other religions have produced hymns and sacred poems of high order, but none can be compared with the psalms. They run the whole gamut of human experience, expressing adoration, penitence, petition, praise and thanksgiving, love and joy, and it will have to be admitted, hate; for at the time they were written the forgiveness of enemies was not considered a virtue. Because of the heroic way the psalmists faced the hard problems of life, their writings have been an inspiration to millions of others in the stress and storm of life. Not all of the psalms deal with grave and solemn things. Many of them are running over with gladness and joy, and nowhere in all literature do we find the goodness of God as revealed in *nature* so wonderfully expressed.

The Song of Songs.—This was one of the last books to be admitted to the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures, and its final admission was due to two reasons, namely, its supposed Solomonic authorship, and the belief that it was an allegory which repre-

sented the mutual love between Jehovah and the Jewish Church. Christianity accepted the book, but with a different symbolism, Solomon representing Christ and the Shulamite maiden the Christian Church. It would not be difficult to show that Solomon could not have written the book and few now see in it any symbolism. Scholarship has shown it to be a collection of Hebrew love and wedding songs, with little or perhaps no religious significance. The book was written or compiled between B. C. 400 and 300.

Hebrew Wisdom.—During the time immediately preceding the exile there were three classes of Hebrew teachers, the priests, the prophets, and the sages, or wise men. "For the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet" (Jer. 18. 18). The priests concerned themselves chiefly with legal matters and ritual; the mission of the prophets we have already seen. The sages correspond to the philosophers of other nations, yet it was generally not a speculative but a practical philosophy that they taught. As the prophets disappeared in the centuries following the rebuilding of the temple, the sages as well as the priests grew in importance.

The book of Job.—This book is the noblest work of Hebrew literature that has come down to us. Tennyson pronounced it "the greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern times." Its subject, the mystery of suffering, is one to which no thinking person can be indifferent. The question that confronts the author is, How can the sufferings of the righteous be reconciled with the goodness and justice of God? In the time of the author all suffering was believed to be a sign of the divine displeasure, presupposing sin on the

part of the sufferer. Against this belief the author voices his passionate protest. The mystery of suffering is not solved by the book, yet the reader is convinced, as was Job, of the insufficiency of human wisdom to fathom the ways of Providence, and should be satisfied, as was Job, to trust the justice and kindness of Him who created the wonderful beauty and harmony of the universe.

In structure the poem may be classed as dramatic, though the action is chiefly in Job's own soul. The date of the book is about B. C. 400.

The book of Proverbs.—This book, which reached its present form about B. C. 300, is the simplest expression of the wisdom of the Sages, and consists of several collections of aphorisms, or wise sayings. Tradition attributed it to Solomon, but it is the work of many Hebrew sages, probably extending over a period of nearly a thousand years. The subject of the book may be said to be Wisdom, and the object to show how a happy and prosperous life may be secured. We do not find in the book of Proverbs the spiritual insight and the passion for righteousness that so move us in the works of the prophets, and many of the maxims are frankly utilitarian. Yet it must be said that the authors do apply religious principles to the ordinary affairs of everyday life, and the book is a wholesome and helpful one.

The book of Ecclesiastes.—In this book the author endeavored to "see what it was good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their life"; that is, he sought to know what it is that gives most satisfaction in life. He assumes the character of King Solomon because of his reputed riches, power, and wisdom, and describes how he sought satisfaction under

many forms, only to find that "all is vanity and a striving after wind." The book has a reputation for pessimism which is hardly deserved. The author is oppressed by the circumstances of his day, and gropes vainly for light. Yet he preaches the sturdy doctrine that even if life's mysteries are insoluble, and the crooked cannot be made straight, one need not despair, but may and should find happiness in labor and in all the good that comes to his hand.

The date of the book is about B. C. 200, a time of unusual depression for the Jewish nation, shortly before the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes. One of the chief values of the book is that it shows as does nothing else in the Old Testament how deeply a suffering and discouraged world had need of the coming of Christ.

Hebrew literature a development.—In our study we have seen the beginnings of the Hebrew religion, when it partook of the crudities and superstitions of the surrounding tribes. We have watched its slow but sure growth upward, the ever-widening vision of God, and the constantly deepening conception of moral obligation. It is a long step from the immature morality of the book of Judges to the spiritual exaltation of the book of Job and the loftiest of the psalms; but it is only when we understand both that we can appreciate the marvelous spiritual achievements of the Hebrew race.

NOTE.—These books are especially recommended:

C. F. Kent, *Songs, Hymns and Prayers of the Old Testament.*
R. G. Moulton, *The Literary Study of the Bible.*
A. R. Gordon, *The Poetry of the Old Testament.*
J. F. Genung, *The Hebrew Literature of Wisdom; The Epic of the Inner Life* (a commentary on Job).
W. T. Davison, *The Praises of Israel* (a commentary on the Psalms).
E. H. Plumptre, "Ecclesiastes," in *The Cambridge Bible.*
G. Currie Martin, "Proverbs," "Ecclesiastes" and "The Song of Songs," in *The New Century Bible.*

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(The dates that are wholly conjec ural and those concerning which there is considerable difference in opinion are marked "c.")

B. C.	
c1292–1225	Ramses II
c1225–1215	Merneptah
c1200	Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt
c1025–1010	Saul king of Israel
c1010– 970	David king of Israel
c 970– 932	Solomon king of Israel

The Divided Kingdom

Judah	Israel
c932–916 Rehoboam	
c932–912	Jeroboam I
c887–876	Omri
c876–855	Ahab
c874–850 Jehoshaphat	
c790–739 Uzziah (Azariah)	
c785–745	Jeroboam II
722	The fall of Samaria
c720–692 Hezekiah	
c692–638 Manasseh	
c637–607 Josiah	
607 or 606 The fall of Nineveh	
621 The Deuteronomic Reform	
597 The first Babylonian Captivity	
586 The destruction of Jerusalem	

Post-Exilic Period

B. C.	
538	The fall of Babylon
538–332	Palestine under Persian rule
c536	Return of the first group of exiles
516	Dedication of the second temple
458 (?)	Ezra's visit to Jerusalem
445	Nehemiah's first visit to Jerusalem
332	Submission of the Jews to Alexander the Great
320–198	Palestine under the Ptolemies
168–142	The Maccabæan wars
142– 63	The Maccabæan state
63	Palestine a Roman province
37– 4	Herod the Great
A. D. 70	The destruction of Jerusalem.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

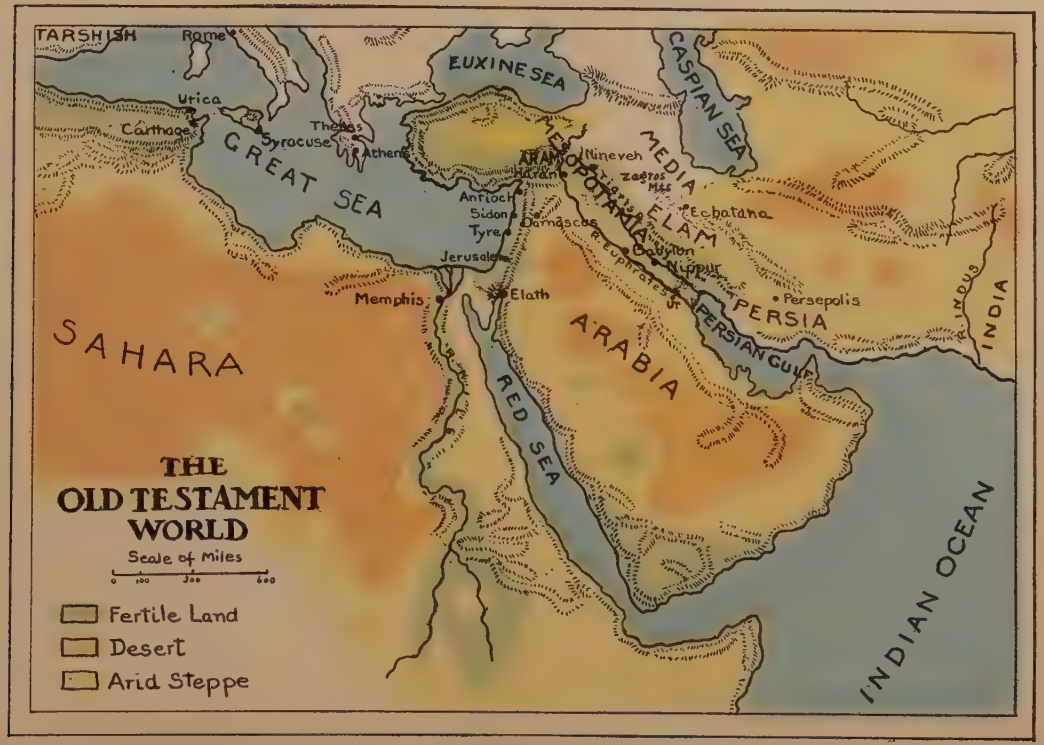
Books recommended for supplementary reading are divided into two groups, the first group containing those regarded as most essential.

GROUP I

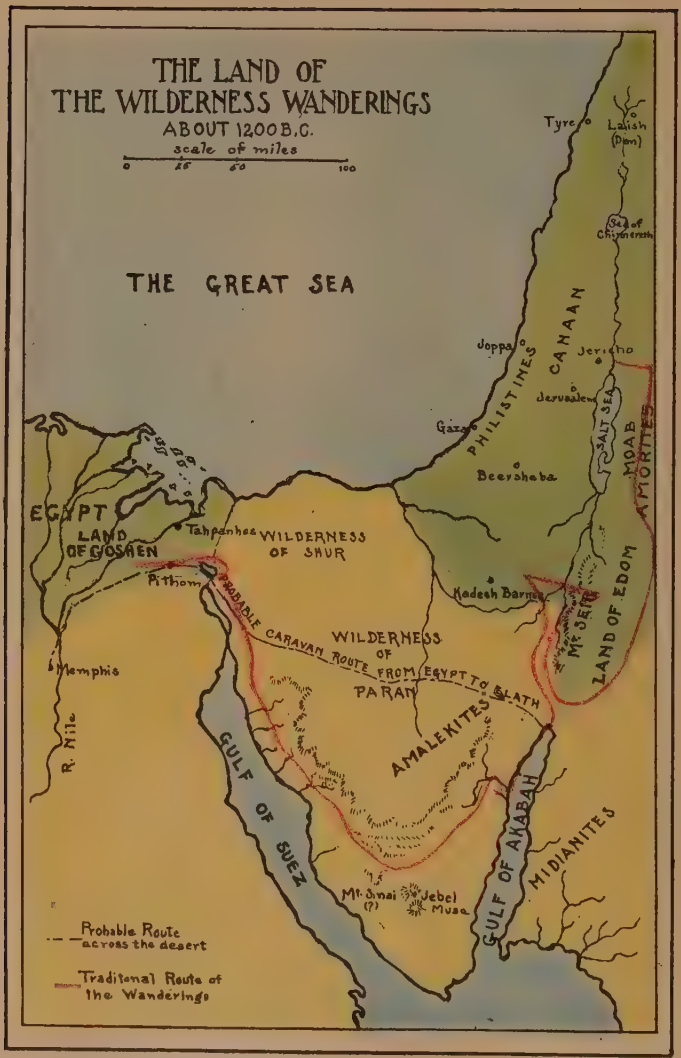
Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, one-volume edition.
Peake's *Commentary on the Bible.*
The Historical Geography of the Holy Land, George Adam Smith.
Atlas of the Historical Geography of the Holy Land, George Adam Smith.
The Orient in Bible Times, Elihu Grant.
The Heroes and Crises of Early Hebrew History, Founders and Rulers of United Israel, The Kings and Prophets of Israel and Judah, The Makers and Teachers of Judaism, Charles Foster Kent.
Introduction to the Old Testament, J. E. McFadyen.
The Prophets of Israel, Carl Cornill.

GROUP II

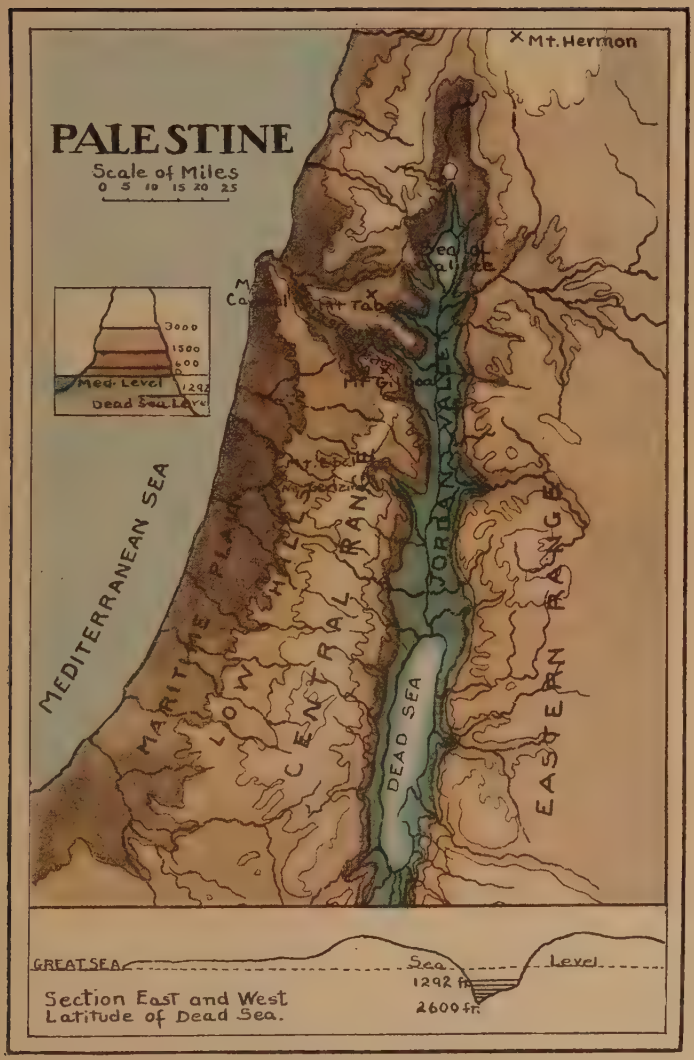
A Short History of the Hebrews, R. L. Ottley.
History of the Hebrews, Frank K. Sanders.
Old Testament History, Ismar J. Peritz.
History of the Hebrew Commonwealth, Bailey and Kent.
History of the People of Israel, Carl Cornill.
A History of the Hebrew People, Charles Foster Kent (2 vols.).
A History of the Jewish People (Babylonian, Persian and Greek periods), Charles Foster Kent.
A History of the Jewish People (Maccabæan and Roman periods), James S. Riggs.
The Jewish War, Flavius Josephus.
Jerusalem under the High Priests, Edwyn Bevan.
The Literature of the Old Testament, George Foot Moore.
The Literary Study of the Bible, R. G. Moulton.
The Book of the Twelve Prophets, George Adam Smith (2 vols.).
The Social Teachings of the Prophets and Jesus, Charles Foster Kent.
Greater Men and Women of the Bible, James Hastings.
The Religion of Israel, George A. Barton.
The Ethics of the Old Testament, Hinckley G. Mitchell.
Religious Development between the Old and New Testaments, R. H. Charles.
Archæology and the Bible (third edition), George A. Barton.
A History of the Ancient Egyptians, J. H. Breasted.
Ancient Times, J. H. Breasted.


TARSHISH
Rome
EUXINE SEA
CASPIAN SEA
Utica
Carthage
Syracuse
Thebes
Athens
GREAT SEA
MESOPOTAMIA
Haran
Nineveh
MEDIA
Zagros Mts
Tigris R.
ELAM
Ecbatana
Antioch
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Euphrates R.
Babylon
Nippur
Jerusalem
Memphis
Elath
Persepolis
PERSIA
PERSIAN GULF
INDUS R.
INDIA
SAHARA
ARABIA
RED SEA
INDIAN OCEAN
THE
OLD TESTAMENT
WORLD
Scale of Miles
0 100 300 600
Fertile Land
Desert
Arid Steppe

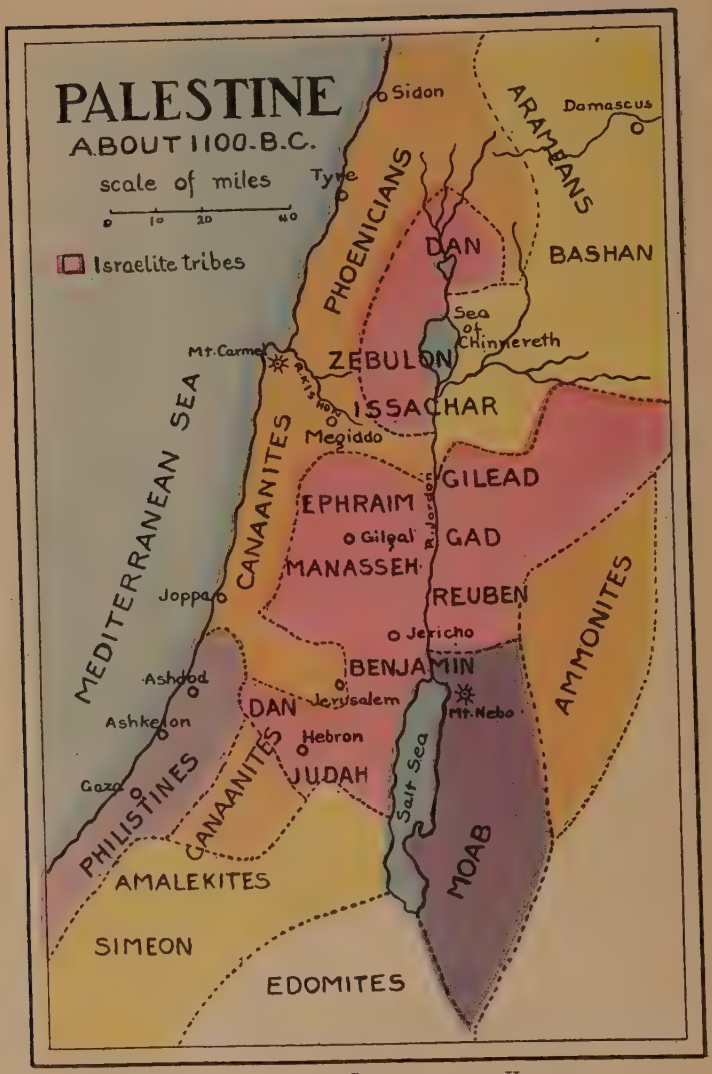
MAP I



MAP II. EGYPT AND THE SINAI PENINSULA

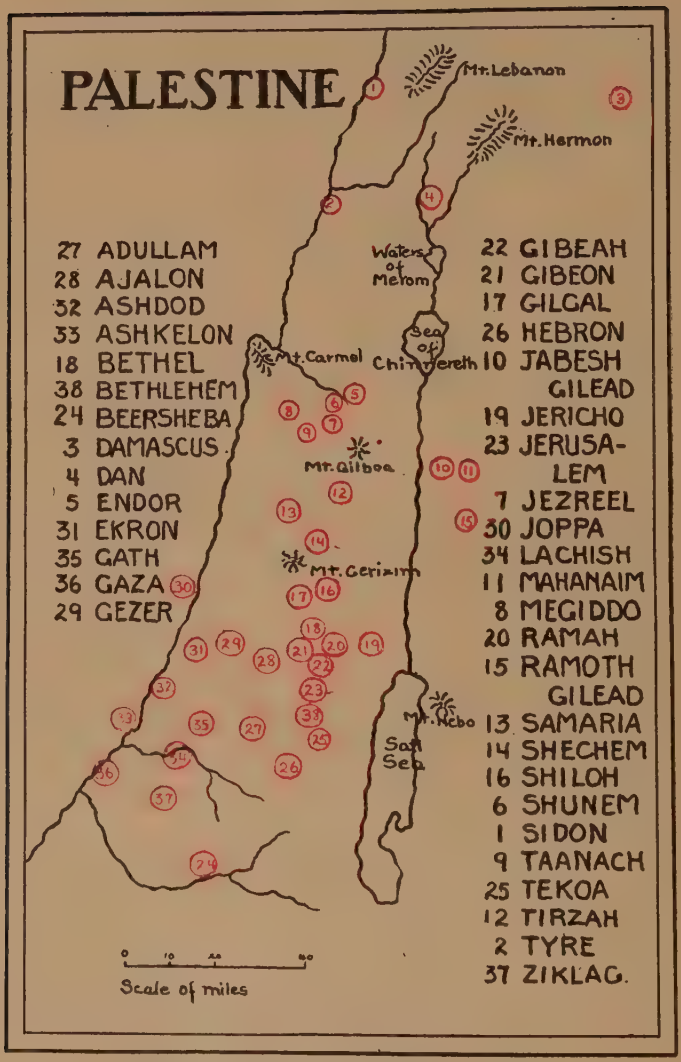


MAP III. Relief Map

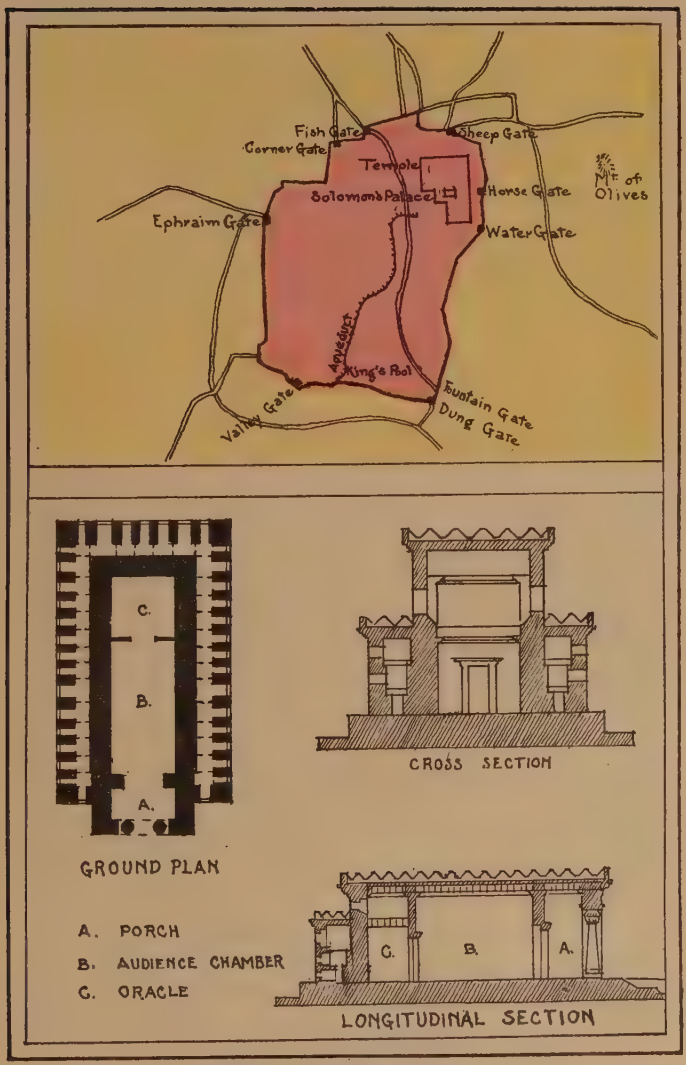


MAP IV. After the Conquest by the Hebrews

MAP V. The Kingdom of David and Solomon

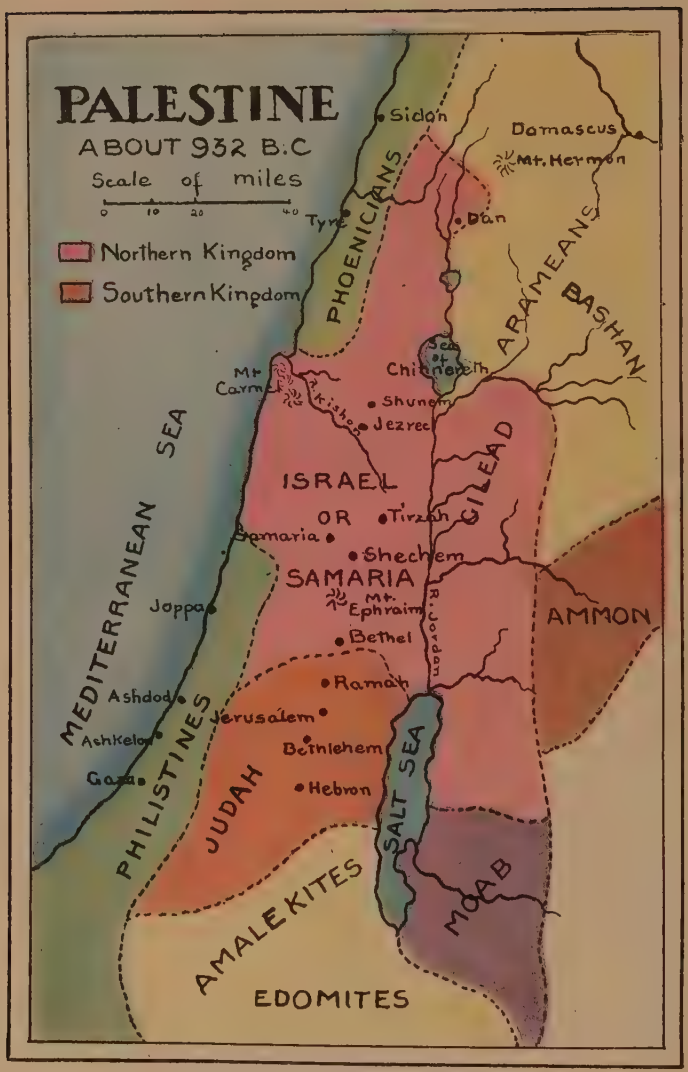


MAP VI. KEY TO OLD TESTAMENT PLACES

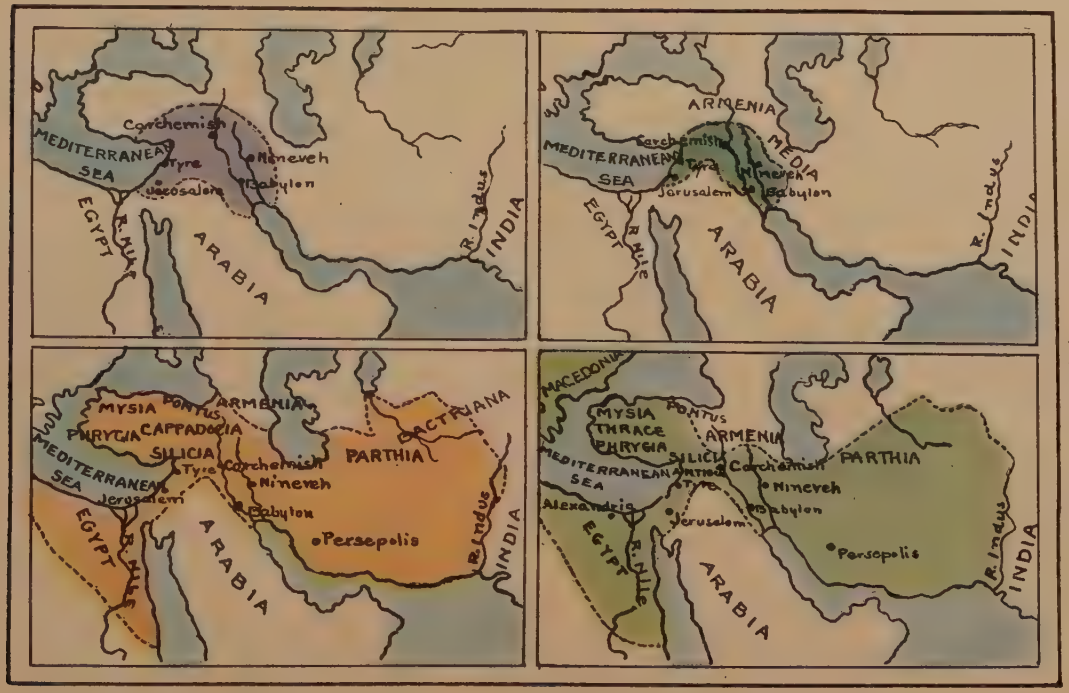


MAP VII. Ancient Jerusalem

MAP VIII. Restoration of Solomon's Temple (according to Stade)



MAP IX. The Divided Kingdom

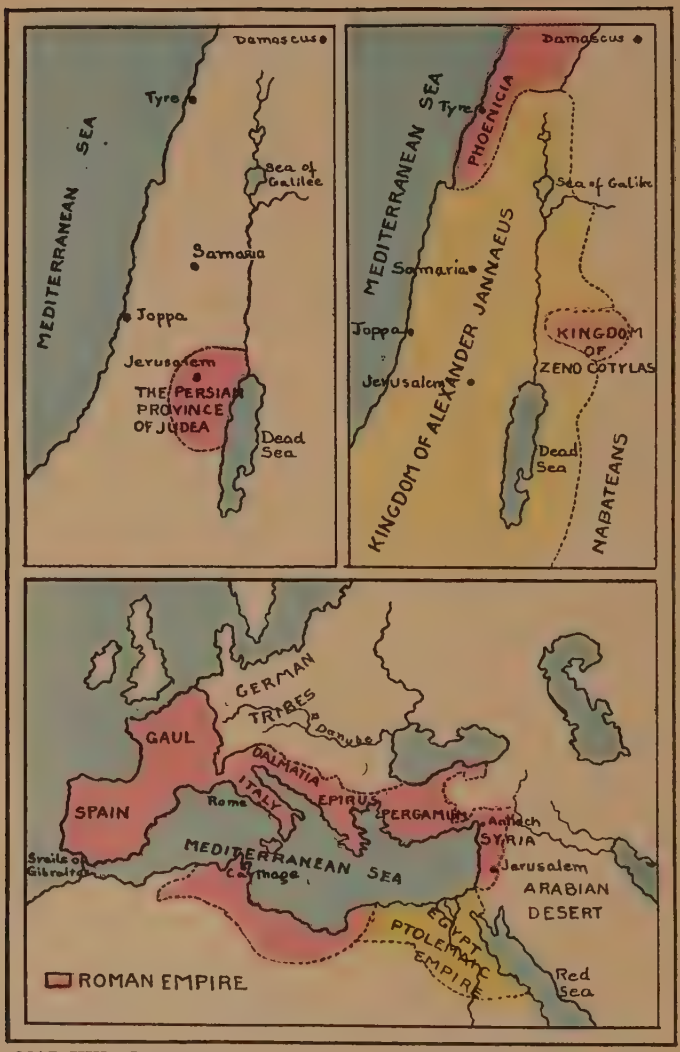


MAP X. The Assyrian Empire about B. C. 700

MAP XI. The Babylonian Empire about B. C. 580

MAP XII. The Persian Empire about B. C. 500

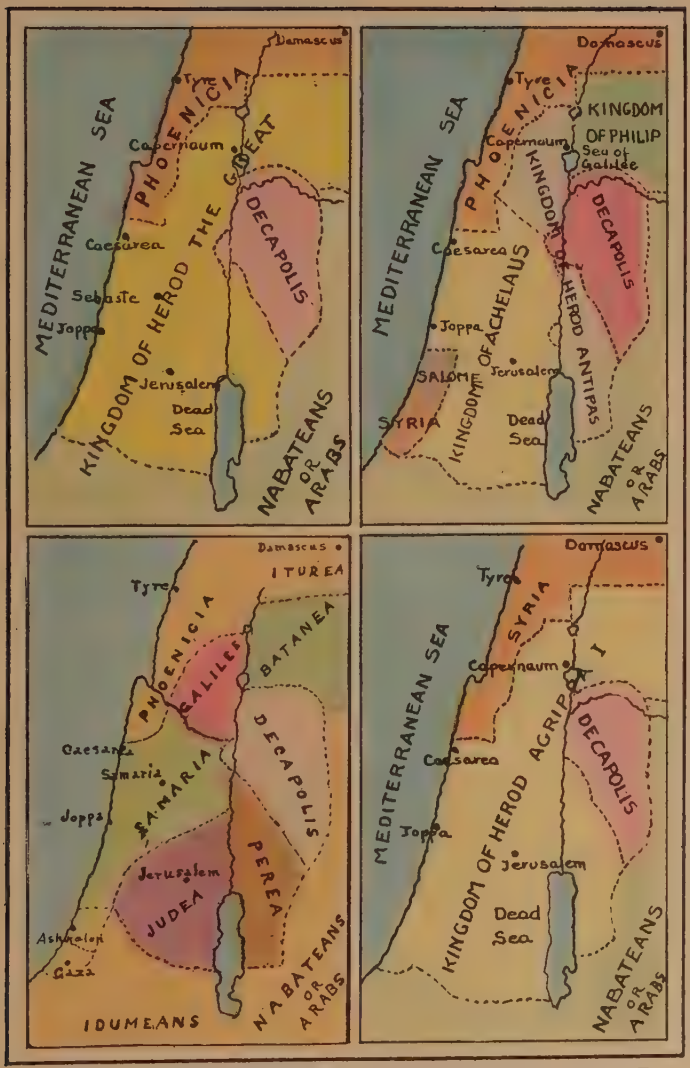
MAP XIII. The Grecian Empire about B. C. 323



MAP XIV. Palestine in the Time of Nehemiah

MAP XV. Palestine under the Maccabees about B. C. 78

MAP XVI. The Roman Empire at the Death of Cæsar, B. C. 44



MAP XVII. Palestine in the Time of Herod the Great

MAP XVIII. Palestine in the Time of the Sons of Herod

MAP XIX. Palestine in the Time of Christ

MAP XX. Palestine in the Time of Herod Agrippa I

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